



THE Wire

June 2014



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The Magazine of The Royal Corps of Signals



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The Wire



Published bi-monthly
Annual subscription £12.00 plus postage

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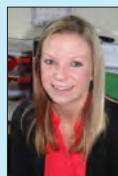
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Deadline for The Wire : 15th February for publication in the April.
15th April for publication in the June.
15th June for publication in the August.
15th August for publication in the October.
15th October for publication in the December.
10th December for publication in the February.



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To see The Wire on line or to refer to Guidelines for Contributors, go to:

<http://www.army.mod.uk/signals/25070.aspx>

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All enquiries regarding subscriptions and changes of address of The Wire should be made to: 01258 482087 or 94371 2087 (mil) or CorpsAccounts@royalsignals.com. Remittances should be made payable to Royal Signals Benevolent Fund

CONTENTS

Page

News from Operations	2
News from Blandford	7
News from Training	10
News from Formations	19
News from Regiments	22
News from Squadrons	89
Other Units	92
Sport	96
Adventurous Training	98
Royal Signals Association	106
Last Post	112

June Edition

Corps Subscriptions (The One Day's pay Scheme)

Your money - what is it and where does it go? - Page 55

Adventurous Training

In line with the new policy of Wire submissions instead of formal PXR's, we have several AT reports from Units in this edition:

- Ex FROZEN FELIX - 521 EOD Sqn skiing in Bavaria
- Ex CARRIBEAN WINGS - Sailing in the Carribean
- Ex REGAL SWAN - 30 Sig Regt skiing in Val Thorens
- Ex NORTHERN GOKYO - 2 Sig Regt expedition to Everest Base Camp
- Ex DRAGON ALPINE - 22 Sig Regt skiing in Les Contamines, France

FRONT COVER

Poppy Lawes presenting HRH with a Posy during the recent Royal Visit to 15 (IS) Sig Regt



BACK COVER

15 (IS) Sig Regt Apr 14



Authors alone are responsible for the content of their articles. The opinions expressed in the articles of this publication are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy and views, official or otherwise, of the Royal Corps of Signals or the Ministry of Defence. All articles and submissions are published at the discretion of the Editor.

This publication may contain official information. It should be treated with discretion by the recipient.

NEWS FROM OPERATIONS



21st SIGNAL REGIMENT



OC **Maj P Stowell MBE**
SSM **SSgt Miller**

The initial 5 months of the tour have disappeared in a flash with the closure of Lashkar Gah, MOB Price and Durai Junction all completed and the transition of mission secret users to the US Centrix-ISAF system well on track, it was time to focus briefly on development training. With a bit of imagination and exploiting the resources in Theatre the team have managed to generate some cracking training and below is a small taste of what's been achieved. As you read this we'll be back to the day job; closure of TFH HQ and the initial stages of Bastion remediation all need to be cracked before we hand over the mantle to 1ADSR in June.

Grenade Range – by LCpl Scott

On 2 April 2014 HICSSS personnel took part in a grenade range organised by **SSgt Miller** to revise grenade handling techniques and refresh our skills at throwing the L109 grenade at a fixed target. The morning started at 0745 where we paraded to board the bus service to the grenade range. On arrival at the range we were given our safety brief by **SSgt Miller** and split into our details of six. We were then escorted to the troop shelter where we sought refuge in a buried ISO container surrounded by HESCO Bastion and comforted with brew making facilities. We were then called to the range in our details where we had to undertake a 200m run in full PPE to reach the range. On arriving at the firing point a final safety brief was given by **SSgt Miller** and we took our places to throw the grenade.



Pre throw

Each person had two or more grenades to eliminate the targets, which proved to be a harder challenge than expected. Our objective was to land the grenade within 5 metres of the target to destroy the Figure 11 'enemy'.

As we were given the order to ready the grenade by our individual safety staff, the safety catch was removed and the index finger was placed through the pin. On the order



Post throw

'throw!' the grenades were released at the target with a strong throw and the participants took cover tight into the HESCO Bastion. This was followed by the wait for the explosion which seemed longer than 3-4 seconds and ensued with a loud bang and a quake as the noise echoed through Camp Bastion, which left its inhabitants quaking in their boots. We then made our way back to the troop shelter with a light hint of adrenaline helping us complete the 200m run slightly faster.

Pre CLM Cadre - by Cpl 'Briss' Brissett

It's 24 Mar 14 in Camp BSN and 15 soldiers fully packed with osprey, weapons and day sacks holding all the gear you'd expect for a patrol, bar rations, make their way to the HICSSS compound. For those soldiers observing, the question being asked was whether the alert state had gone up. For those 15 however, their minds were focused on one thing, the Pre CLM Cadre organised by **SSgt Miller**.

Although this week would see the end of the last 5 monotonous months, the scheduled programme of patrolling lessons, commands tasks, orders lessons and fitness tests would see us all surely exhausted by the end of the week... if we made it that far.

Monday morning saw us all sat in the classroom we'd assembled just outside HICSSS compound, we were all seated with nothing but a pen. This meant only one thing, examination time. Many of us were nervous, trying to cast their memories six or more years to basic training to remember acronyms and battle procedures. Some soldiers had spent the previous night trying to cram as much of the military syllabus into their brains as possible, others would trust their natural military knowledge to shine through (at least that was the plan). The test was sat and the results collated, everyone did better than they expected which set us off to a good start. Presentations saw us all working together to give the answers the instructors were waiting to hear. **SSgt Miller** became a new man and as soon as his theory



lessons on patrols started many were confused as to where 'Milfs' doppelganger had appeared from, at this **SSgt Miller** could be seen smiling! Over the next few days we learnt a multitude of military subjects ranging from patrolling and occupation of harbour areas to how to send MIST (AT) reports and create models. We all enjoyed the classroom lessons, not only were the instructors forgiving for any "skill fade" we had but in the back of our minds was the anxiety we all had knowing that the patrol lessons was fast approaching.



Up



and over

So came the patrol lessons and we were taken to RSOI via coach, from there a small brisk walk to the training area. For those of us that were prepared, the first bit of kit to emerge from our day sacks was a set of knee pads. **SSgt Miller**, informed us that the lessons were not to be a ragging but that didn't stop us all from wishing we'd also packed elbow pads. Dry runs of the drills we'd been taught came only to give those without knee protection a chance to recover. The CO, followed closely by his entourage, came to visit us to observe how the lessons were going on. This was a chance to impress! After all the pleasantries a small demonstration of how to locate the enemy, the demo section all geared up, got into extended line and prepared to patrol forwards in the direction of the enemy. Then, disaster! **LCpl Camm** stumbled. He had twisted his ankle trying to negotiate what can only be described as a mole hill. "That's me Staff, I'm going to have to sit this one out!" squeaked **Camm**, closely followed by a bellowing "Man Down!". **SSgt Miller** sent aid to poor **Camm** and cracked on with the demonstration.

For most of us the day was enjoyable and everyone came away learning something, if not a confirmatory lesson on the

skills and drills learnt in basics. **LCpl Camm** was later found licking his wounds in the classroom and dealt with the obligatory banter very well.



The model pit



LCpl Camm giving orders

The most notable part of the course was the orders. For many speaking to an audience was a worst fear, for others the speaking part wasn't the problem but knowing what to say was! Everyone took turns giving their orders and one by one we put on our osprey and headdress to issue orders to the section. Certainly everyone had their unique quirks in briefing others, some were quiet others were loud and dramatic. What everyone did have in common was the beads of sweat running down their faces and the sweaty shirts and UBACS beneath the osprey. We all had fun picking each others' orders apart but also all learnt something valuable in the process. After all, it's good to learn from your mistakes but even better to learn from someone else's.

Burns Night – by Cpl 'Sleeper Cell' Usher

As the senior Jock within HICSSS it came to be that **Cpl 'Rigid' Reffin** was to organise an event that would knock all events out the water! His task was to organise the Burns Night, a night that celebrates the life of Scotland's most famous bard, Robert Burns. To add a bit of activity to the occasion this was combined with the first gathering of "The Helmand Highland Games".

As is tradition with a Burns Night, a haggis was piped in and addressed to start proceedings. As luck would have it, 21 Sig Regt had deployed with a piper, namely **Cpl 'Older than**



Moses' Prideaux, who helped add a very important part of the Scottish flavour to the night. Addressing the haggis was in the more than capable hands of our very own "**Rigid Reffs**", who may have got slightly overzealous in spilling its entrails over the platter. With the haggis piped in it was then time for the main course, a slight twist on tradition, haggis pizza! Although many had reservations about the food of choice, it went down a storm. Complementing this for dessert was the Scottish delicacy, battered Mars bars.

Once the guests had finished their meals it was then time for a history of Burns and recitals of some his more famous poems and songs, with **Lt Goodman**, **WO2 (SSM) Robertson**, **Cpl Francis** and **Sig Watson** volunteering to step up and entertain the crowd. This concluded the Burns Night part of the evening.

Having split down into teams, the competitors were ready for the "Highland Games". With three events, "Maide Leisg", "Caber Toss" and "Farmer's Dash", and five teams pitting

their strength against each other it was all to play for. First win of the night was by **Cpl Phil Barrett**, from team 1, in the "Caber Toss", man that guy can 'Toss'. Next was the "Farmer's Dash", won also by team 1, captained by **SSgt 'Laser Beam' Miller** (British AB). To conclude the games there was a deciding tie between **SSgt (FoS) Vernon** and **Sig Bamford** in the "Maide Leisg", a test of strength akin to tug o' war, with the FofS overcoming his opponent with relative ease. This result meant that team 1 were the overall winners of the inaugural "Helmand Highland Games". Coincidentally, this had nothing to do with **SSgt Miller's** help in sorting out the team sheets.

Rounding up the night was Comd JFCIS(A) **Gp Capt Lloyd** with a few kind words of thanks and encouragement for the lads and lassies of HICSSS as we move into a very busy period of remediation within Camp Bastion and the rest of Helmand as a whole. With Op Herrick coming to an end, it's fair to say that 220 Sig Sqn celebrated the last Burns Night in Bastion in some style.



7 ARMoured BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (207)



MAIN TROOP

As always mentioned in these notes, it has been a busy period for 207 Signal Squadron over the last few months. Having got over the main R&R period with everyone coming back here refreshed we are back to our normal manning numbers as a Troop. This in no way has made the job easier for any of us as the shifts have been split down to another location. RC (SW), integrating some elements of what was TFH with the Americans in Camp Leatherneck.

We have also seen the closure of all but one of the forward locations. With the exception of **Cpl Abusah**, all the personnel from Price, Lashkar Gah and Fob Durai have transited through Bastion and are now on their POTL waiting to welcome the rest of us in April and June. The RRB at Sterga 2 is still manned by **LCpl Tompkins** and one of the new members to our team, **Sig Davies**.

Along with **Sig Davies** there were several more newcomers which arrived in BSN to conduct a mini-RIP allowing some of the techs and operators to EOT. After what sounds like an eventful journey over here, courtesy of the RAF and a NIKON camera, they arrived and completed their RSOI before settling into their new shift patterns.

As we watched the guys leave that had put so much effort into turning TacCIS Village and obviously the comms that go with it, we saw some changes. As well as the shuffling of manpower we now have **Cpl 'Oz' Peat** as a shift commander replacing **Cpl Hanley** who rumour has it will be serving us a few more than four drinks in Cyprus.

With the beginning of the RC(SW) amalgamation, the shifts have had to shrink. We now have three members of each shift manning both TFH HQ and TacCIS Village at once, and four operators with **Cpl Page** heading it up, who now live in Leatherneck permanently to cover RC(SW) and sample the delights of the US 'Chow Hall'.

From the stores point of view this has also been busy. We have had to procure enough equipment for RC(SW) and the Force Protection elements in the CJOC from various sources across BSN. As a bespoke build, the CJOC equipment was

fitted by the FRT and after a few hiccups is now complete and IAW.

The RC(SW) project was completed by mid April. It has endured much testing as the four man team down there had to practice several scenarios daily before going live. It consists of two Bowman MDOR's plus several extras as an alternate COC also had to be set up in the 30K building. Initially, the main MDOR was setup in what was MCU 2. Tested in TacCIS Village it was ready to go several weeks before the anticipated move.

The 30m mast was dropped and this was craned onto a flat rack waiting for the word 'GO'. It was moved into the RC(SW) compound with no real dramas other than some crazy Yank accusing the Brits of moving his steel guy ropes. After a couple of late finishes, up to around the time the 'Chow Hall' we had comms with the remaining FOBs in Helmand.

Along with work, everyone has also had a little time to relax. **Cpl Bryan** has recently organised a leaving BBQ to which most of BSN was invited. The Brigadier came along and although he got into round two of the table tennis tournament he was knocked out by **Sig 'My career has just been put on hold' Jones**. I'd hate to be the man who presents his next SJAR!

We also had a visit from Ed Sheeran who managed to visit the troops in their working environment before performing his concert. **Sig Burnett** took him through a radio check in TFH HQ and he got to talk to Sterga 2. **Sig Jim Davies** panicked when hearing his voice but I believe comms were in and working with strength fives all round!

With the projected closure of TFH we will have to move the equipment back into the stores for redistribution and we will also see several more members of our Troop head back home. **Cpl Peat**, **LCpl Cobb**, **LCpl Tompkins** and several more will be heading back to Hohne, leaving the four in RC(SW) and a couple of operators in 'The Village' to keep **Capt Miller**, **Sgt Graham** and **Sgt Somerville** topped up with brews. There also might be a few times when they are needed to keep on top of the Bowman issues, but you always need a cuppa when you're sorting problems out. The one good thing coming out of the COC is the American's stash of biscuits and ground



coffee. By stash, imagine an air-conditioned room the size of two porta-cabins and it's stacked to the roof. Welfare – not warfare!

Sturga 2 - by Sig Davies

After waiting for what seemed like a lifetime, it was finally our chance to deploy on Op Herrick 19. The first seemingly simple step was getting there. Much to everyone's surprise, even this simple step was hindered in the form of an 8000 feet nose dive and an emergency landing in Turkey. Between **Sig Caress** screaming in my ear and the vision of people smashing into the ceiling, I couldn't help but compare what I was seeing to scenes from the TV series *Lost*. It didn't take me long though to realise our plane wasn't half filled with stunning single woman and that there probably wasn't many tropical islands to crash land on, so I figured it would probably be better to land. Eventually 2 airports, 2 hotels, 3 planes and a Tacho Bells later, we arrived in Camp Bastion.

As usual, our first 3 days consisted of RSOI which began with a day of briefs. The highlight of this day was either going to lunch or knocking off. The next two days were more practical with a tabb to the ranges. Once the jack wagon had finished picking up what remained of the RAF Regiment, we went on to do zeroing followed by a close quarter shoot. After completion of RSOI we were issued with our own ammunition allowing everyone to get themselves down to the local national's shops. After some pretty feeble and submissive haggling, everyone seemed happy going back to their accommodation each with knock off Beats that even Dell Boy would cringe at.

I alone out of the new group was given the job of maintaining the RRB at PB Sterga 2. As soon as I landed I met with **LCpl Tompkins** who, if he didn't mention, "was on Herrick 14". Once I had been given the tour of the camp and shown the bags I'd be defecating in, I was straight into routine. This routine would consist of eating, sleeping, staging on in sangers, manning the radios in the ops room and getting massive. Unfortunately my initial idea of going to the gym was minimal time with spectacular results.

Most recently the whole of Sterga took part in the Sterga Games. This was a team event that relied on different operational skills to get through different tasks and scenarios. My team was the last to go and were fortunate in having an array of trades within our group making it more diverse than a Michael Jackson music video. As well as doing each stand, we had to do so while carrying a resus Anni doll plus weight on a stretcher. Despite our most impressive best efforts, our team had to settle for runners up (so lost) under controversial circumstances.

With the fate of Sterga 2 unknown I will be continuing to maintain the RRB as well as homing my skills on the volley ball court for future sporting competitions.

PRRS - by Sig Sackey

The first three months of the year has been different for the 'Task Force Power' team at PRSS.

As the withdrawal of troops on the ground and the closure of PBs and FOBs continues, the workload has gone up. More generators and power has come in, inspected and redeployed back to the UK.

Most of us had the idea of getting away from the cold snow of Europe to the hot sun of Afghanistan until the unexpected happened. It snowed for about a week.



The Task Force Power Team

R&R is the topic at the moment since most of us are now going through. Due to the fantastic efficiency of the RAF, **Cpl Flannigan** had 2 extra days. He reckons the RAF is his favourite airline, even though he cried due to a couple of hours delay in Bastion.

Sig Sackey had the opportunity to visit an American PB for a quick inspection. On his return he decided to raid the American's ration store for the guys back in the PRRS. Not a bad effort.

The last few weeks have been interesting and fun. A BBQ organised by our engineering hero with an Ibiza beach theme. Fantastic and Symmetrically arranged photos posed by the guys with the two most iconic kits around. Unfortunately, the all time famous 'tash man' (**Cpl Willis**) shaved the 'tash' because he was scared of his domestic boss (the wife).

It has been a very long tour and as the Department members are passing through their R&R, soon it will be time to go home for good.

Warthog Group RLD - by Sig Jones

So far in 2014, **LCpl Fell** and I have had a busy period attached to the Warthog Group as a rear link detachment on Op Herrick 19. We have been providing communication and IT support throughout the Squadron, such as vehicle maintenance, running the stores and repair chain, keeping the operations room up and running and any other related tasks.

We are enjoying every challenge that gets thrown our way and often find ourselves thrown in at the deep end. Every so often we get to take part in operations outside of Camp Bastion which adds to the diversity of our role and lets us gain valuable experience.

We have approximately 10 weeks to push until our estimated leave date, so we will continue to work hard, give everything we have got and fly the flag high for 207 Signal Squadron.

There is no doubt that this tour has been a great way to learn our job, especially under pressure at times and taking this experience back to our unit at the end of tour is invaluable.

I regularly go running around Camp Bastion as I am currently training for the 'Warthog Marathon' which is 26.2 miles. I am sure I can twist **LCpl Fells** arm and get him to participate eventually.



TFH HQ Real Life Support

- by Sig Clapperton and Sig McDermott

March has been an interesting and demanding month as the RLS approach the end of TFH HQ and the end of Op Herrick 19, but for **Sig 'Gaz' McDermott**, **LCpl 'Paddy' McLoughlin** and **Cpl Matt Hunt** this is only end of an era as they will be moving on to join the Manoeuvre Battle Group's A2 Echelon until June 14.

Next month sees 70% of RLS depart with **SSgt 'Jas' Janes**, **SSgt 'Jase' Lowes**, **SSgt 'Mac' McMullen**, **LCpl 'Riddy' Rydeard** and **Sig 'ClapDog' Clapperton**, who End of Tour at the start of April. This will see the end of **Sig Clapperton's** extraordinary stretch of nights alone in the RLS with 'drive' jobs galore declaring himself nocturnal, but he has finally watched the complete 'Band of Brothers series'!

In this month there have been more hectic days with the drawdown of TFH HQ, and SO3 Visits (**Capt Clayton**) constantly keeping the RLS stretched to the four winds with VIPs and VVIPs getting in their last visits to TFH HQ. **Sig 'Gaz' McDermott** has been kept constantly busy as a permanent feature on Duty Driver Days providing an excellent service for the staff officers in TFH HQ; with some of the pain now easing with Brigade Staff moving off to new adventures and joining new departments as TFH HQ folds this month.

With the fold of TFH HQ, along with personnel moving onto pastures new within Bastion, the SQMS, **SSgt Lowes**, and his minions (**LCpl McLoughlin**, **LCpl Rydeard** and **Sig McDermott**) have had kit thrown about left, right and centre. This has caused teddies to be thrown in corners with the strain of drawdown running alongside the preparation to leave Theatre getting closer by the day with no respite.

SSgt McMullen has been spread to every corner of Camp Bastion; whether it has been the return of kit via freight, or the complete handover of accommodation on Camp 501 to 6 different major units, which as usual has resulted in the simplest of tasks causing the biggest problems. With these tasks in the foreground, behind the scenes all the Brigade Staff and those within the RLS who are not remaining behind have been relocating to Camp 124 (Bastion's own 'Afghan Village').

However, it is all not doom and gloom within the RLS. Morale is still at an all time high due to the personalities within the RLS team, which unfortunately will see some key members depart upon their return from a very successful and "enjoyable" tour. Good luck to all those departing before we return home.

207 Signal Squadron Relief in Place and Arrival in FRT

- by LCpl Bloor

Reaching the halfway point of OP HERRICK 19 it was time to relieve some members of the Squadron in Theatre. Under **SSgt Lowes**, myself and 7 operators travelled overnight to Brize Norton on 8 Feb and then departed on a flight to Camp Bastion on a shiny new Voyager.

Unfortunately as the journey was going way too smoothly by this point the plane decided to go into a steep descent which resulted in everyone getting the Zero G experience. Fortunately the pilots levelled the plane out for us, and we recovered all the scattered belongings, boots and ceiling panels. Well mostly, **Sig Davies**, aka the tightest man in NATO is still diffy an iPod. We landed in Incirlik (USAF) Base, Turkey.

After a day and a half enjoying the American hospitality and cookhouse, and raiding the PX it was back on a flight to Brize

Norton to give it another go on the next available flight. Fortunately all went smoothly and we arrived in Theatre in the late hours of the 13th. The next few days were busy, incorporating an orientation of Camp Bastion, a 5 day RSOI package, HOTO and then straight into shift.

The FRT have had a busy few months with Bowman equipment being serviceability tested ready for redistribution in Theatre. We did manage to send **LCpl Daly** off properly with a pizza and poker night. FRT also welcomed **Cpl 'Baby Tech' Watts** back from the RLD with 2 Royal Anglian, who spent a couple of weeks in the workshop before his end of tour.

Heading into March, **Sgt 'That's 10' Berridge** and **Cpl Cresswell** are taking some long overdue R&R and **Cpl '2.4 Women' Bryan** has very kindly 'volunteered' to organise a summer BBQ on behalf of Main Tp for the guys that will end of tour in April.



Sgt Berridge delighted with his new locally purchased watch

Estonian Company - by Cpl French

The first of April will see EST Coy 17, the last Estonian contingent in Afghanistan go offline as they are no longer a FE after the transition to RCSW.

This will enable myself and **Sig Rabar** to begin closing down the various accounts and return equipment used by the Company. This should prove a very busy period!

The Company do not depart until 10 May so they will be on hand to help with the return of the vehicle park and accommodation, already having proven themselves very helpful in any task that comes up.

24 February saw the Company celebrate Estonian Independence where a parade was held and awards handed out to Estonian and UK soldiers.

This was then followed up a concert. Unfortunately the cheerleaders from previous tours could not make it and thrash metal band "Vinnie Puuh" were drafted in. The music was very... different and energetic (!) Even the Estonians had trouble understanding what they were saying at times.

I recommend checking them out on YouTube to see for yourselves.



NEWS FROM BLANDFORD

HEADQUARTERS ROYAL SIGNALS



HQ R SIGNALS Financial Support to Adventurous Training Exercises

The Corps Colonel fully supports R SIGNALS personnel participating in Adventurous Training activities. These activities are ideal for demonstrating the ethos and esprit de Corps, to fully stretch the capabilities and endeavour of R SIGNALS personnel whilst participating and in some cases achieving in a challenge which is both fun and rewarding. The Headquarters R SIGNALS in collaboration with the Royal Signals Trustees Limited (RSTL) offers through non public funds modest financial support to organised Corps Adventurous Training Exercises. The aim in providing these funds is to enable individuals to realise their full leadership and endurance potential by participating in an exercise where the activity or the environment offers a real challenge and demands an element of personal courage and

determination. All R SIGNALS personnel, Regular and Reserve, who contribute to the one day scheme are eligible to apply for the funding. Exercises must

assist to a maximum of £75 to serving members of the Corps and each application will be considered on its merits, taking into account the level of assistance from other sources and the priority accorded to the activity by the Unit concerned.

Following completion of the exercise, a confirmation e-mail from the AT OC or Deputy must be sent to R SIGNALS HQ-WLD-C2 (Barlow, David Mr). This must be accompanied by an article for *The Wire*, along with supportive imagery (in .jpg format). This replaces the requirement for formal PXR's.

The Adventurous Training Grant fund is managed by People Group, HQ R SIGNALS. The Policy Directive 168 – Adventurous Training Grants, located on the HQ R SIGNALS Intranet website, provides the specific detailed direction, guidance and application form for the Adventurous Training Grant. Further details are available from David Barlow C2 WLD 94371 2098.

be properly organised Level 3 training defined in AGAIs. Individuals are expected to

contribute a minimum of 1/3rd of the overall cost of the exercise or expedition. Grants to help with accommodation, travel and the hire of civilian instructors and guides are available from Public Funds and should be applied for separately. In exceptional circumstances, and with the agreement of the RSTL Board of Directors through the Regimental Secretary, a grant from the Corps AT fund may be made for particularly interesting and challenging activities that do not fully conform to the strict requirements of Level 3 training.

The principle is to give modest financial

EXERCISE DIAMOND MANSKI 24 JAN 2014 – 01 FEB 2014 1 (UK) ADSR MANAGEMENT SKIING

When it first started to snow on the 24th of January, the 1 (UK) ADSR Management Skiing team was in the middle of their training. The weather was perfect for the exercise, with the snow falling at a steady pace. The team was in good luck, as the weather was just what they needed for the exercise. The exercise was a challenge for the team, but they managed to complete it with flying colours. The team was in good luck, as the weather was just what they needed for the exercise. The exercise was a challenge for the team, but they managed to complete it with flying colours.

EXERCISE NORTHERN GEO ADVENTURE 4 18 - 25 JAN 2014

Exercise Northern Geo Adventure 4 was an adventurous training exercise for the 1 (UK) ADSR Management Skiing team. The exercise was a challenge for the team, but they managed to complete it with flying colours. The team was in good luck, as the weather was just what they needed for the exercise. The exercise was a challenge for the team, but they managed to complete it with flying colours.



EX LIGHTNING

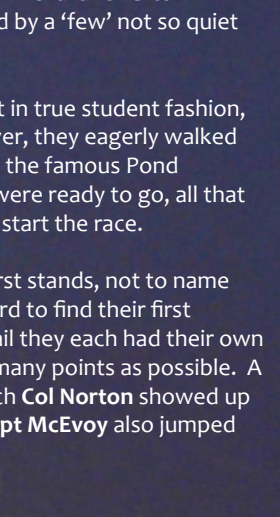
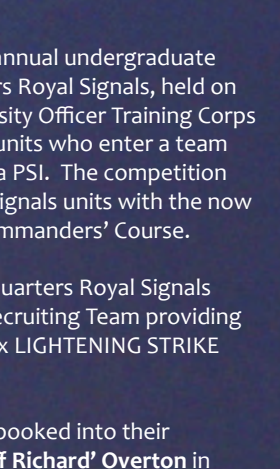
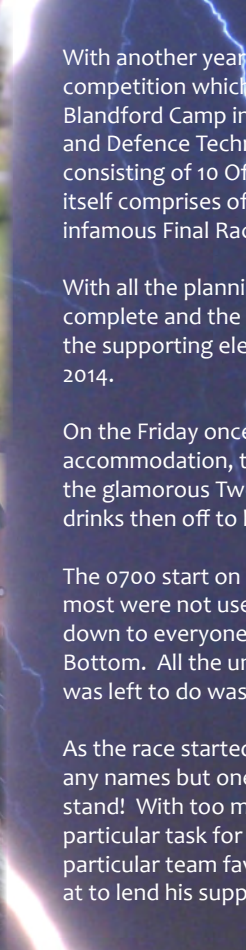
With another year another Lightning Strike, an annual undergraduate competition which is sponsored by Headquarters Royal Signals, held on Blandford Camp in February. Open to all University Officer Training Corps and Defence Technical Undergraduate Scheme units who enter a team consisting of 10 Officer Cadets accompanied by a PSI. The competition itself comprises of 10 Stands manned by Royal Signals units with the now infamous Final Race, organised by the Troop Commanders' Course.

With all the planning and organisation by Headquarters Royal Signals complete and the newly re-established Corps Recruiting Team providing the supporting element, it was time at last for Ex LIGHTENING STRIKE 2014.

On the Friday once all the units had turned and booked into their accommodation, they were briefed by **Capt 'Cliff Richard' Overton** in the glamorous Twenty 20 bar. This was followed by a 'few' not so quiet drinks then off to bed.

The 0700 start on Saturday morning proved that in true student fashion, most were not used to being up so early; however, they eagerly walked down to everyone's favourite location on camp, the famous Pond Bottom. All the units manned their stands and were ready to go, all that was left to do was wait for the Corps Colonel to start the race.

As the race started each team hurried to their first stands, not to name any names but one team found it particularly hard to find their first stand! With too many stands to describe in detail they each had their own particular task for each team to try and gain as many points as possible. A particular team favourite was the Log Race which **Col Norton** showed up at to lend his support to. Not to be outdone, **Capt McEvoy** also jumped



STRIKE 2014

- by Sig Wren

on the log and drove the team to the end. The Final Race provided the teams with 'fond' memories and the spectators great entertainment as they watched the teams complete the "rat pack scoff challenge".

Now that all the events were complete, the scores were in and the teams waited nervously for the announcement to take place. This was done at the formal dinner, the entertainment for the evening where the Taurus B team took the glory. Everyone enjoyed the experience of an Officers' Mess function. Special mention must go to **Capt 'Mr Vice' Keenan** and **Capt McEvoy** for their part in the evenings events and to the staff for providing an evening to remember.

Sunday arrived for the teams with a slightly cloudy feel as they prepared to head back to their units whilst suffering the effects of over indulgence. The CRT looked forward to the clean up operation after a welcome Sunday afternoon off!

Thanks go to Headquarters Royal Signals, **Maj Kelly** and the civilian staff as well as all of the units that supported the exercise:

- 1 Sig Bde
- 3 Sig Regt
- 10 Sig Reg
- 14 (EW) Sig Regt
- 18 (UKSF) Sig Regt
- 37 Sig Regt (V)
- 38 Sig Regt (V)
- 71 Sig Regt (V)
- 216 Sig Sqn
- 299 Sig Sqn (SC)



NEWS FROM TRAINING



11th (ROYAL SCHOOL OF SIGNALS) SIGNAL REGIMENT BLANDFORD



CO Lt Col M C Brookes
RSM WO1 (RSM) C Hoggard

2 (CATTERICK) SQUADRON

OC Maj G M A Wills
SSM WO2 (SSM) K Umney

SHQ

With somewhere around 400 people in the Squadron life has continued at an unrelenting pace as we continue to train the future CS Ops and CLSs of the Corps. The sheer amount of soldiers within the Squadron means there is a significant amount of G1 issues that arise with discipline and welfare being the main protagonists. Now that **WO1 (YofS) 'Mac' McDonnell** has relocated to SHQ he has started looking at instigating a 'Strictly Come Dancing' style scoring system for the SSMs 're-education' of the Phase 2 soldiers (and occasional Phase 3 and PS!).

During his MPAR with the CO the OC, **Maj Graham 'Big G' Wills** thought it was a good idea to volunteer himself to head up the Regimental Trailwalker effort this year. Unsurprisingly a persistent recruiting campaign around the Squadron followed and the Squadron will be entering a number of teams come July which will include the 2IC, **Capt Graham 'Little G' Ashman** who, despite his efforts, is not posted by then!

We would like to say thank you and good luck to **WO1 (YofS) McDonnell** who leaves us this month for PJHQ and a warm welcome to his replacement **WO1 (YofS) Dean Wicks**. Finally we would like to congratulate **Sgt Grimes** for being selected for promotion on the recent Sgt – SSgt board.

Op PITCHPOLE – by Sig Luke Powney

Coming into work at 0650 hrs on a Saturday is nobody's ideal weekend, but when you know it's for a good cause you're more than happy to help.



Op PITCHPOLE is all about helping the surrounding population combat the floods and bad weather we've been having, and if I'm honest I wasn't expecting it to be as bad as it was! 11 (RSS) Sig Regt was tasked to help people in Romsey and as soon as we got off the coach the trouble was obvious, with gardens flooded and rivers overflowing.

We were laying down sandbags and trying to redirect/block off the flooding and it was soon apparent that the local population were really grateful, taking pictures and thanking all of us. Moments like that make you really proud to be helping and even prouder to be a soldier, the guys in green turn up and everything's better!

It was genuinely a pleasure to help people in times of need and all the graft was well worth it to see how grateful the locals were.

RHINO TROOP

OC WO1 Wells
SSgt SSgt Stewart

Rhino Troop saw the end of an era with a farewell to **WO2 'Trev' Evans** who left the position of Rhino Troop SSgt on promotion to WO2. **SSgt 'Gaz' Stewart** arrived from 299 Signal Squadron (Special Communications) on promotion to take over the reins with a second stint at Blandford Camp.



We also welcomed **Cpl Jamie Wells** into the team, who arrived from 14 Signal Regiment (Electronic Warfare).

Ghurka Museum visit – by Sig Baillie

On the 26 Mar 2014 **LCpl Bipendra Gurung** organised a visit for fourteen Phase 2 Signallers to the Gurkha Museum in Winchester. This gave the soldiers the opportunity to see the history and courage displayed by Gurkha soldiers leading up to the 200th anniversary of their ties with the British Army.

The part of the visit that surprised most soldiers was the process that young Nepalese men have to go through in order to join the Gurkhas. Both physically and mentally challenging, it was very interesting to see how their process differs from the selection that recruits face in the UK. What stood out was the 5km gruelling hill race that the young hopefuls have to complete in order to be eligible for entry into the Gurkhas. Thousands of men compete for limited spaces and it is not only tough for the participants but equally challenging for people assigned to select the best of the best.

BEAUFIGHTER TROOP

OC **Capt Simpson**
SSgt **SSgt Harrison**

Jurassic Coast Challenge 21 – 23 March 2014 – by Cpl John Russell

This is a story of ultimate peer pressure. I hadn't been in Beaufighter Troop for more than a month when this talk of the *Jurassic Coast Challenge* started to build up, eventually dominating the conversations around the office. Before I knew it I had agreed to take part, foolishly, without asking what it actually involved. **Cpl "Mikey" Milburn** then explained the delights that lay ahead: it was a series of three marathons, in three days, across the Jurassic Coastline in Dorset.

"Mmm – coastline - beautiful." I thought.

Over January and February we worked on our conditioning by running the odd 10 or 15 mile run. The team still remained unconfirmed and we were still to register our places on the challenge, organised by VOTwo Events. The last of us achieved registration with only two weeks until the event, probably trying to get away with it unnoticed. **Cpl Milburn, Cpl Paul 'Doris' Day, Capt Rich Simpson** and I were to be the team representing 11 (RSS) Sig Regt, although it was officially a civilian 'individual entry' event.

On the morning of Friday 21st March, we all made our way to the challenge HQ in Wyke Regis, Weymouth. Carbed up and raring to go, the four of us sat there nervously. There seemed to be an abundance of very professional looking marathon runners. The nerves got the better of **Doris** so, taking the opportunity to add more carbs, he poured himself a pint of the free Betty Stogs beer that was on offer. It was 0900hrs! By 1130 we were all ready with numbers attached, kit checked and transport waiting.

Charmouth – Wyke Regis

We arrived at a car park on a hill in Charmouth. After jumping out and getting our beloved warm kit off, we headed for the unceremonious start and began our first 26 miles. The route to begin with was, as expected, cliff edge running with impressive views. Spirits were high and optimism was the *soup de jour*! Five minutes later the soup was spilt – we were faced with the daunting sight of what can only be described as a 'Brecon Hill', next to the sea.

For the following 13 miles or so we dealt with these heart-attack inducing hills, one after the other. It did eventually flatten out and we managed to get some miles of running under our belts, only to be faced with a couple of miles of shingle beach. A lifetime later we were privileged to have a little bit of tarmac where there was opportunity to remove Chesil Beach from our footwear. The last miles of day one now seem a bit blurry but there was some running through MoD ranges and there was definitely a point where we were attacked by nasty hailstones. We crossed the line together at slightly over six hours.

Wyke Regis – around Portland – Lulworth Cove

Saturday morning was sunny but a bit windy at the HQ. The second marathon was to start at the HQ with a nice run south onto Portland. I found myself running alone for the first 5 minutes because the rest had jacked on me while I was draining the natural hydration system. This however, played into my hands at the end of the day. The route around Portland involved climbing to the top of the cliffs, running around the quarry and coming back down the same way. It was during this stage that **Capt Simpson's** leg, being made mostly of metal, began to slow him down. We made a group decision, in true Top Gear fashion, and ran on without him. By the time we had reached checkpoint two (the start point) we had covered the first 13 miles and the next five were a gift. The route took us along Weymouth seafront which was bustling with members of the public enjoying their Saturday afternoon, bravely obstructing the path at every opportunity. At one point **Cpl Milburn** nearly got his retirement when a woman drove a car at him in the town centre, presumably to prevent others from seeing the horrors of his uber-revealing shorts.

As we neared the end of the beach and built up areas, the sight of what was to come had revealed itself. The hills were a full size replica of what we had started on during the previous day. Needless to say it took some encouragement to get through those last miles, the biggest boost being the chance to overtake some of the walking group who set out hours earlier. There's nothing better than smugly passing a 65 year old lady going up a cliff side! **Doris** and **Mikey** finished the second day with an involuntary sprint down some knee-shattering steps, just beyond Lulworth Cove. I had finished two minutes faster, in 6 hours and 14 minutes, due to the jacking at the start, and **Rich** crossed the line shortly after.

Lulworth Cove – Studland Bay

The third day brought with it some changes to the starting line-up. **Capt Simpson** had made the sensible decision to join the earlier group, so had set off with a head start facing the mind numbing choice of a solo run. The start for the remainder of us was a stiff and mind-testing challenge. We





started on a big ol' hill and spent some of the first 13 miles contouring the ranges at Lulworth. It was during this stage we were introduced to the steps that had been a major talking point on the minibus. If our knees were strong by this point, it definitely wouldn't stay that way for much longer. We observed lots of techniques for getting down these steps but it seemed the only reliable way was to just go for it, preferably eyes closed!

By the time we'd passed these hills we were halfway through and leaving checkpoint two. Shortly after we caught '**limping Rich**', which was the point when my shin felt like it was going to explode and had grown abnormally larger than normal. But, in true soldier like fashion, I carried on, although the idea of walking did cross my mind and was discussed with **Doris** at intervals of every half mile. We pushed on. Eventually we were closing in on Studland Bay and the end was in sight, or so we thought. The final few miles was a slow, spring-less run along the beach (apparently a nudist beach) to the finish line, where **Mikey** sprinted away and abandoned loyalty for valour in order to avoid being beaten by a lanky bearded civvy.

With three full marathons in three days covering a total of 16,000 feet of ascent, it had been a challenge like none I've done before but it was worth it. After all we got a T Shirt and a medal. Would I do it again? Probably not. Would I recommend it? Absolutely!

IRON TROOP

OC **Capt Bennett**
SSgt **SSgt Worrall**

Iron Troop Day Out – by Cpl Phillip Wain

Recently Iron Troop had a day trip out to Bournemouth as a way to say Hello and Goodbye to a number of personalities that have moved in and out of the Troop.

We have been pleased to welcome a new Troop OC, in **Capt 'Sam' Marsden**, and Troop Cpls **Cpls 'Enzo' Entwistle, Luke Muchmore** and **Richard 'Whitey' White**. Unfortunately this has meant that we had to say goodbye to the outgoing Troop OC **Capt Matt Bennett**, Troop Sgt **Sgt Paul Howe** after 25 years service and Troop Cpl **Cpl David Somerville**.

We decided that the best way to do this was to get the whole of the Troop's permanent staff together (not an easy thing to do in a training regiment) and have a rare "Personal Development Day" in sunny Bournemouth.

The day started out with the traditional vehicle first parade and paperwork filling out, before the assembled members of the troop climbed aboard our minibus to freedom and took

flight out of camp and on our way. On arriving in the town and knowing what was in front of us later on in the day, we decided to start the day off slow and steady by heading to the Russell-Cotes Museum and Art Gallery to take in a little Victorian age culture and expand our minds a little before lunch.

We next made our way into the centre of town, to the Moon in the Square for a quick drink and a small bite to eat while we awaited our next scheduled appointment. It was here over lunch that '**Enzo**' demonstrated a perfect DS example of how not to play "Tell Him/Her" by collecting his now treasured Beetlejuice autograph.

After lunch it was time for the main thrust of the day, an afternoon of fun and games learning to mix (and drink) cocktails of varying colours, tastes and strengths, all of which would help liven the mood and help us get to know the new guys, and more importantly for the new guys to find out exactly what they had gotten themselves into for the next few years.

After a number of rounds of fast paced, high intensity cocktail making the traditional style Cuban Mojito stood tall as the winner, while members of the party slumped in defeat after the alcoholic barrage of **Whitey's** over-fuelled Long Island Iced tea.

Emerging from the Cocktail bar suitably lubricated a few hours later, it was time to meet up with a few late comers to the day for a delicious meal at Coriander's Mexican Restaurant where, sombreros and all, the traditional speeches for the three leavers began, led in fine form by **SSgt Gemma Worrall**, as she sang the praises for each one in turn and presenting them with gifts from the rest of the Troop before finishing up with an impassioned speech to the new arrivals about how important their new jobs are as mentors to the new generation of trainees .

After the meal, unfortunately our group had to split in two, with a few unlucky (or is that lucky?) ones heading back home ready for work commitments early the next morning, and the rest heading back out in to town ready to hit the clubs and paint the town red, but that's a story for another time...

3 (HARROGATE) SQUADRON

OC **Maj R Jacques**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Kemp**

SHQ – by Capt (TOT) Dave Cook

The pace of life in the Squadron Headquarters continues unabated, with the Engineering Squadron running at full tilt. Training the Foreman of Signals, Foreman of Signals (Information Systems) Engineers, Installation Technicians and Electricians to keep the Corps communicating, not to mention delivering the Falcon Conversion Training and application support through DOATT, it is fair to say there are many fingers in many pies.

The Squadron was always kept on an even keel through the safe guidance of **Maj Jo Wilson**, who sadly has moved on to new challenges within **CD Info**. We wish you, **Scotty** (when he is about) and the boys all the very best of luck on your move to Andover.

The Squadron did say farewell in style though, holding a Leaving Do in the Royal British Legion, Blandford. Both civilian and military personnel took this opportunity to say their farewells with a fun filled evening, good company and good music. As testament to how highly **Maj Wilson** is



regarded by our civilian colleagues, entertainment was provided by our resident performers: **Mr Dave Rivett**, Head of Comms Tech Section (or Dave and the Rivettes) provided a live band, going down an absolute storm. This was ably matched by the vocal talents of **Owen** and **Darren** aka Mr Darren Gonthier, Head of IT Foundation Skills doing their best crooning for our delight. The icing on the cake was literally the icing effigy of the OC, lovingly crafted by **SSgt (FoS) (IS) 'Mary Berry' McNeal**. Thanks must go to **SSgt Phil Brown** for his herculean efforts to arrange the event single handedly!



The cake!!!

It is a pleasure to welcome **Maj Becky Jacques** as the new OC Squadron. We are sure you will enjoy the demands and rewards of Command in such a diverse Squadron.

Military Support Section – by Sgt Smith

As part of the ongoing search for training perfection, MSS have been tirelessly aiming towards a golden solution when it comes to its 3 exercises, these are run throughout the year for the Phase 2 and 3 soldiers at Blandford. The first part of this was to design a new server solution for the current servers. The solution was for all the training servers for each exercise to be under one management domain as child domains, which will make monitoring and testing of the students that come through Piddlehinton camp a lot more efficient, and will enable more realistic faults and real time scenarios to be run concurrently.

The next phase is to reconfigure the current setup and bring it into line with the plan. This will involve the whole section and no doubt be a steep learning curve for the majority. With **Sgt Pete Mellor** and **Sgt Andy Hogg** leading the way as the old heads within the section.

MSS would also like to welcome **Sgts Richie 'pob' Knight** and **Kriti Rai** who are welcome additions due to the fact that the Section is quite undermanned for the work we have to do, and the training we are expected to provide.

As well as the never ending exercises the Section provides, some of its members have found time for some extracurricular activities, with **Sgt Chris 'the beast' Slade** attending and passing his MAPRIC course with flying colours giving himself another badge to sew onto his neckerchief. **Sgt Jason Smith** captaining the Regimental hockey team at the Signals Cup competition. The Signals Cup being the annual Inter Unit hockey competition held at Aldershot over 2 days, with an outdoor tournament on day one and an indoor tournament on day 2. 11 (RSS) Sig Regt were undefeated outside and finished winners, but only managed 3rd indoors. Only by the sheer amount of assists from **Sgt Smith**, and a few goals from **Sig Gavin Hughes** did the Regiment narrowly beat 14 SR on goal difference to retain the Signals Cup for the umpteenth time.

Exercise MERCURY SNOW RIDER V – by Sgt Jason Smith

An unlikely partnership was struck up between 11 (RSS) Sig Regt, 15 Sig Regt (IS) and ISS, in that each of these units had only one representative for Ex MERCURY SNOW RIDER V and so decided to join forces. After a rather exciting (read boring) drive to our stopover accommodation in Elmpt it was time to taste the delights of Bruggen and partake in some liquid refreshments. It was here that **Sgt Jason 'Lee-Roy Jenkins' Smith** was introduced to a game called 'credit card roulette'. As soon as **Sgt Smith** pulled out his bright pink credit card, the waiter was uncontrollably drawn to it, which could mean only one thing, a free meal for **WO2 (FoS) Pete 'Barnacle Bill' Fraser** and **SSgt (FoS) Si 'Shaun White' Brewington**. After a few games of 'shock' using equipment which had been recently liberated from the bar where they formerly resided, it was time to crash what seemed to be a birthday celebration of sorts. Feeling underdressed, **Sgt Smith** took it upon himself to turn his coat into a cape and draw a big handlebar moustache on his face. The reasoning for this decision was never made clear.

The first few hours of the 10 hour drive were a blur as **Sgt Smith** had volunteered for the first driving shift. This left the other two in the back to discuss tactics for the upcoming events. Once we finally arrived in Rauris it was time for the opening brief by the committee, which was concise and relaxed, a good sign for what lay ahead. The first week focused on training, provided by the Dutch 'RipStar' team, which was absolutely top notch. This was in preparation for the series of competitions which were planned for the second week. Due to the fact that there was an impressive 150+ people on the camp, organisation and administration had to be strictly controlled and full credit to the committee for making the qualifying phase so smooth.

First up was the Slalom event, which consisted of a separate race for the novices, after which the intermediates and advanced riders battled it out. Slope Style (Freestyle) was next and as expected, there were some 'sick' runs down the course by individuals who actually knew how to look cool while spinning, seemingly out of control, through the air.

Last but definitely not least was the Boardercross, in which 4 snowboarders start simultaneously at the top of a winding, inclined course and race to reach the finish line first. This event is as much fun to watch as it is to take part in. Luckily there were no serious injuries sustained during this stage (most of the injuries happen during the first week!).

All that was left was medals and biscuits, which were distributed on the last night, to all of the esteemed winners. As it turned out, no one from this dream team won anything or even progressed past the first round. Perhaps more time should have been spent discussing tactics and not playing 'shock' in the bar.



Royal Signals Electrician Basic Course - by Sig Pavli

Having completed Basic Signalling Skills we started the main part of our Royal Signals Electrician course on 18 Nov 13. At the start we were taught the different engine components and how an engine works, this we were told are the basic fundamentals of our future job as a Royal Signals Electrician working within a generator bay in a field unit. After we passed the required assessments we moved onto what we



Sig Pavli being presented with the Top Student Award by Maj Wilson - OC 3 Squadron



Sig Cowley receiving Top Field Soldier Award from Maj Wilson - OC 3 Squadron

were all looking forward to, getting our hands dirty and stripping and assembling the most basic generator which we have, the 2KW LFG. This we enjoyed and learnt a lot from both civilian and military instructors. Having completed that module we were then taught about in service batteries, FEPS generators, the different types of power distribution equipment and lighting equipment. This was a lot of information but we knew that we would at some point come across all this during our career as electricians.

Finally, with the end of the course in sight we deployed on Exercise SOUTHERN LIGHTS with **SSgt Prakash** leading and **Sgt Thornton**. This was the best part of the course because everything we had been taught within Power Section from stripping and assembling generators to supplying power was tested, this confirmed to the instructors and us that we were at the required standard.

We had to work hard and sometimes found it difficult due to the amount of information we were required to know in such a short time. As a course we feel stripping and assembling the 2KW LFG was a great learning experience, utilising and following the AESPs both in camp and deployed on exercise. Overall, having completed the course and qualified to become a Royal Signals Electrician has been one of the highlights in our career so far.

Foreman of Signals Course 84

It's been another busy term in the faculty for course FofS 84. This term has seen us start 3 new subjects in the form of computer hardware and digital electronics, networks security and network management, all of which are being thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. We are also saying farewell to several subjects, ITIL and computer hardware and digital electronics have provided us with plenty of work and some interesting exams but I doubt they will be missed. CCNA is still ongoing from the pre-course TMAs and is making us wonder if there is an end to this subject.

SSgt Lee Greenhough organised a games night for all the supervisor courses. This included beer pong and a pub quiz. **SSgt Jon White** and **SSgt Loz Haworth** proved they have pin point accuracy by beating off all the competition at beer pong.

The fitness of the course is on the up, **SSgt Kenny George** and **SSgt Ian Pauley** competed in the Badbury Rings half marathon. **SSgt Pauley** finished a respectable 10th and **SSgt George** commented he wasn't bothered about his position, he was enjoying the views. The course looks set to enter this year's Trailwalker with training under way. The only member of the course who appears to be missing out on his gym time is **Sgt Purcell Charlery** who has spent far too much time revising and needs to get back in the gym to regain his bulk.

The second term is nearly over with only 2 weeks left with the Command Instruction Wing. Everyone has felt the pressure this term and the pace of the course has certainly not let up but everybody is looking forward to the Easter break and returning for the joys of term 3.

BATTLEAXE TROOP

OC **Capt Kedar Rai**
SSgt **SSgt Gerard**

Exercise HARROGATE WHEEL - by Sig Joshan Gurung

On 12 Mar 14, 3 (Harrogate) Squadron organised Ex HARROGATE WHEEL which was a recreational Go-Kart event. The main aim of this exercise was to develop team spirit, self-



confidence and leadership qualities of the soldiers, particularly aiming at Phase 2 soldiers within the Squadron. It was a team-building exercise in a competitive indoor Go-Kart race at Wessex Raceway. The event was coordinated by **LCpl Bachan Thapa Magar**, who is currently undergoing his CS Eng Class 1 course.

There were a total of 27 participants, all of whom were really looking forward to it. Obviously, it was our utmost privilege to have this kind of recreational event organised and we really enjoyed it to our fullest. The event was well organised with all the necessities fulfilled, including transportation and guidance throughout the event. We felt fortunate to have such a golden opportunity to experience and participate in such a heart-racing event at a reasonable cost.

All in all, it was very wholesome and well organised event, as we had lots to take away from it. It would not have been possible without the support from permanent staff within the training Troops. We would also like to offer our gratitude to Sqn OC, **Maj J Wilson**, for granting some funds towards the event, and OC Battleaxe Tp, **Capt Kedar Rai**, for pioneering such brilliant idea for the benefit of Phase 2 soldiers undergoing their basic trade training. I wholeheartedly recommend this type of activity to be fruitful if it was included in the coming days. Such extracurricular activity would really bolster one's morale and keep motivation throughout our trade training. Especially in the military, it fortifies soldiers' robustness, leadership, prompts effectiveness and makes them self-sufficient in order to meet the demanding operational requirements of today.

ULSTER TROOP

OC **WO1 Brown**
SSgt **SSgt McCreadie**

Exercise HARROGATE FOLLY

- by **LCpl Sands**, Ulster Troop, 3 Squadron

On Fri 14 Mar, the exercising troops (Phase 2 soldiers) of 3 Squadron set off to Bramley Training Area for Ex HARROGATE FOLLY. I was one of 6 CSE upgraders who performed the role of Section Commanders for the sections who were made up from Phase 2 soldiers. This exercise was jokingly billed as the exercise run for techs, by techs. All Ex Tps and DS bar one were CSE of one form or another.

With eagerness the troops disembarked the coaches and donned their kit. After a brief insertion tab to the harbour areas, exercising troops went into night routine of which **Sig Piazza** and **Sig Topping** (aka 'Pizza Topping') did not waste anytime in getting their head down. At this stage the exercise was quite relaxed, with the sound of the Domino's scooter coming in and out of the DS area (allegedly) competing with the wildlife in our harbour area.

After a restless sleep, caused by the constant blaring of a pheasant, the troops broke into morning routine. The Saturday was spent going to various stands which refreshed the troops on Basic Close Combat Skills. This consisted of Section Attack, Break Contact, CBRN, CIED, BCDT and Tactical Movement. A Tactical Night Navigation exercise concluded the day's activities, of which groups of 3 or 4 were to go to specific manned checkpoints on the training area. The words 'Tactical' did not come to mind with **Sigs Niraj**, **Nabin**, **Sig Ale** and **Sanjaya**, although they completed the Night Nav in the fastest time due to them going at the speed of a thousand gazelles. They certainly sounded like it.

After another restless sleep and thoughts of having pheasant with bacon and beans, the troops prepared themselves for

what lay ahead. The Patrol Competition started with a 3 mile tab and combat conditioning. The route was planned by the PTI (**LCpl Ingleby**), which finished with a nice cool down; a knee high reservoir crossing. The smell still lingers in the troops' uniform. This then led into the various stands for which the six sections had practiced the day before. The Tactical movement stand had many good examples of 'Cam and Concealment'; **Sig Whittaker** going for the Rambo look and **Sig Benson** emerging from the tree line looking like a Christmas tree. The CIED stand involved clearing in and around a known enemy compound. The troops found out how arduous this can be. The 20 minutes at this stand was spent more or less doing burpees as the Vallons detected every bit of old brass in the ground. In hindsight, this is rather encouraging given what the kit is supposed to detect.

All sections showed a high level of competitiveness and good basic skills. The winners of the patrol competition were 2 Platoon 2 Section which was commanded by **Cpl Ajib**. This was much to the disgust of **Cpl Tyler** who commanded 1 Platoon 1 Section, and thought the colour of his beret was enough to win.



Cpl Bourne debriefing one of the sections

DEPLOYABLE SYSTEMS TROOP

OC **Capt Hebindra Pun**
SSgt **SSgt 'Mike' Wilson**

Exercise HARROGATE LANDINGS – by **LCpl Dan Clarke**

Ex HARROGATE LANDINGS was a battlefield study organised by **Sgt Hodgetts**, Deployable Systems Troop (DST), 3 (Harrogate) Sqn. The study concentrated on the British battle areas in and around the Somme, France where we learnt about the selfless acts performed by the British soldiers during the Great War in 1916.

Day 1

We all met at the museum car park at 0430hrs and set off to Dover to catch the ferry to Calais. Once arriving at Calais we got off the boat and **Cpl Marc Speed** drove us to Arras. Once there we where settled into our accommodation, then half of us decided to take in some of the French culture by venturing on train to Paris, taking in some beautiful sites like the Eiffel Tower. The other half decided to check out the local bars in Arras.

Day 2

When having our lovely continental breakfast the next day, some people at the table looked very rough from the night before. We all then got on the mini bus to meet our very knowledgeable tour guide, who took us to see where the Battle of the Somme took place. The guide was very informative and related many stories about the unbelievable impact it had on the surrounding villages of the Western front



and we also learned how the war was not only on the surface but underground and how miners played a big part in the Great War.

While walking around the historical site the weather was horrible with it heavily raining at times, some of the lads looked freezing wishing they had brought more warm gear with them like **LCpl Aaron Downey** and even **Sgt Hodgetts** who would never admit he was cold. The day was very interesting, learning a lot about different tactics and how the fighting played out; it was also very enjoyable learning about different personalities like the famous inventor William Howard Livens who created a huge Flame Thrower.

After an eventful day learning and a lot of walking it was time for the evening to begin. We found an amazing grill in Arras and had some tasty ribs then decided to find a bar to watch the football knowing Chelsea were playing Paris St Germain. Thankfully Chelsea won and we relished the victory, especially **LCpl Aaron Downey** who was screaming with joy in front of the French!

Day 3

Ready for another day of our tour a couple of people were worse for wear like **LCpl Kez Potter** and **Cpl Marc Speed** who wasn't about to enjoy the drive around the Somme. We picked up our tour guide again and this time we took a look at some great memorials. One of them being the Deville Wood Memorial which is a South African national memorial as it was the first major engagement they entered into on the Western front.

We also looked at other great memorials that day, one being for the 17th Service Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment which was entirely made up of professional footballers and nicknamed The Football Battalion. We also visited the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing which brought home the reality of how many soldiers are still missing to this day and have been denied an honourable burial, with that number being over 72000.

After a very educational battlefield tour it was then time for us to go home. We all had a great 3 days and all learnt a lot from this experience.



Inter – Corps Cross Country – by Cpl Sarah Bevan

The 22nd Army Inter-Corps Cross Country Championships took place on 5 Mar 14. The Royal Logistics Corps were at the organisational helm this year and as such the event was hosted by 25 Training Regiment at the Defence School of Logistics at Deepcut. The event was attended by 10 Corps, entering 27 teams comprising of 184 runners in total. The Royal Signals had four teams running this year, senior female, senior male, veteran male and junior male. The junior team

was the main focus for 11 (RSS) Signal Regiment as it comprised wholly of six Phase 2 soldiers selected from the Regiment to represent the Corps.

On arriving at the event the usual practises of registering the runners and teams took place and the team strips were distributed. It was then a nervous wait for the start of the races. The female race took place first. Runners competed over a distance of 3.8 miles in near perfect weather conditions over an undulating course that was run mainly through forestry on mud tracks. The recent wet weather also led to a number of particularly waterlogged and boggy sections. The men's race began after the female race had been completed with all three categories running together. They raced over a distance of 5.8 miles on a course which incorporated the route run by the females and an extra loop through similar terrain added on to increase the distance covered.

Overall the results were very good for the Royal Signals with the women's team taking first and second place in the individual standings and 2nd in the team competition. The veteran men's team came 5th and both the junior and senior men's teams claimed third place. **Sig Niraj** from Battleaxe Troop, 3 Squadron did particularly well achieving 3rd individual in the junior men's competition.

All are now looking forward to next year's event to be hosted by the Army Medical Service where we hope to do even better than this year.

4 (MILITARY TRAINING) SQUADRON

OC **Maj E A Mortimore**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) B Sherwin**

Exercise TOUGH ENDURANCE – by SSgt Gopal

On 2 Apr 14, 14 members from 11 (RSS) Sig Regt deployed on Ex TOUGH ENDURANCE (The Three Peaks Challenge). This involved navigating the three tallest peaks in the UK; Ben Nevis (1,344m) in Scotland, Scafell Pike (978m) in England and Snowdon (1,085m) in Wales.

During the early hours on 1 April we all packed up into the minibuses knowing it was going to be a long day of travelling to Fort William from the sunny Dorset coast. The bus started off in high spirits, with discussions regarding future events in 4 (Mil Trg) Sqn becoming the topic of conversation.

It soon became clear that travelling in a restricted minibus required a rest stop every 2/3 hrs. It also meant that **SSgt Jonny Howells** had the opportunity to load up on high energy performance foods, which ranged from full English breakfasts to rice puddings.

We finally arrived at Fort William around 1900 hrs and were greeted by our admin team, **Sgt Creighton** and **Sgt Gaylard** at The Goose on the Chase Hostel. After a quick brief on timings and bed spaces allocated, it was time to sample some local grub before getting some rest for the busy day that lay ahead.

At 0500 hrs on the Wednesday it was time to get some breakfast and prepare ourselves for the first and biggest of our climbs, Ben Nevis. A steep 1,344m climb lay ahead of us and we all knew it wasn't going to be easy. The pace started off well and we were looking good to get to the top within a 2 hour time frame. However, as we reached half way the snow was heavy on the mountain and slowed us down drastically. The weather continued to worsen the higher we climbed and the temperature soon dropped below zero, which meant only one thing, it was time to get the warm kit on and keep moving.





WO2 (SSM) Sherwin and SSgt Gopal on Ben Nevis

Keeping the groups together was no easy task due to the snow and icy conditions and eventually the decision was taken to get off the mountain in quick time. The descent was something of a different story; the sun was out and other tourists were on the mountain but we were racing against the clock to get down and on the road to the next climb and next country. After four hours, the knees were beginning to tighten up but we were at the bottom and back in the minibus. The drive to Cumbria was not going to be a nice one, as getting comfy in a minibus was almost impossible.

We finally arrived at Scafell Pike at 1700 hrs knowing there were only a few hours of daylight left, so we quickly got moving. The mountain is 978m, small in comparison to what we had just climbed, but can only be described as the worst mountain of them all. The aim was to complete the climb in daylight hours so we could travel through the night and miss any unnecessary traffic to get to Snowdon. After 30 minutes of walking, WO2 (SSM) Sherwin was on his back legs and realised he needed a sugar rush; after attempting to eat his haribo without opening the packet he was back in the game. After an hour and half we got to the summit. We celebrated reaching the top with a few pictures and a large amount of 'selfies' (mainly by SSgt Howells). The route back down was as hellish as the route up and everyone was feeling the pain in the knees and quads. It became so uncomfortable that the only way to release the pain was by jogging in random directions to get to the bottom sooner.

Less than 3hrs and we were at the bottom of Scafell Pike and greeted by our admin team and drivers, who were waiting with hot food and water. The drive down to North Wales in



Scafell Pike

the middle of the night was the worst journey so far; the minibus was quiet and it was time to get some rest. However, trying to sleep when WO2 (SSM) Sherwin's snoring was louder than a foghorn made it almost impossible for the rest of us to get our heads down.

We reached our final mountain at 0100hrs, the 1085m of Snowdon. We were all walking with tired legs and it was starting to show. But with spirits still high we were off for the night time walk up and we were moving at a good pace. This wasn't an easy task in darkness, but the groups stayed together and pushed each other to reach the peak. After finally arriving at the top in 2hrs, the camera was deployed and the 'Selfies' were produced but we didn't have time to hang around as we weren't sure how long it would take to get back down.... in the dark!

Walking downhill with little light and in a great deal of pain was difficult, but knowing we were on the last part of the walk kept us moving.

Despite being out of our comfort zone, the team completed the Three Peaks Challenge in a respectable time of 23hrs. Maj Mortimore (Ex OIC) presented the medals to the team and praised all participants; she also thanked the admin team and SSgt Gopal for their effort and an excellent job of organising the exercise and seeing it through to the end.

Ex TOUGH ENDURANCE was a complete success with all aims and TOs achieved and the soldiers partaking benefitted from the experience. The exercise was more progressive, difficult and considerably challenging than expected making everyone feel a real sense of achievement at the end.



23 hours later – time for tea and medals

611 (COMMUNICATIONS TRAINING) TROOP

OC Capt M Gauntlett
SSgt SSgt S Ware

Exercise BEACON STRIDE 17 -21 Mar 14 – by LCpl 'Tex' Walker

Day 1 - Pen Y Fan.

The first day of Exercise BEACON STRIDE was to walk Pen Y Fan. We used known paths to give the group a revision on map reading and a nice shake out for the legs to get used to the weight of the bergans that we were to carry every day that contained all the safety equipment. With the weather being exceptionally kind to us, a whole day of sun, the first stage of the exercise was a success.





At the top of Pen Y Fan

Day 2 - The Black Mountains. As anticipated the dreaded Brecon weather came in on day 2; sideways rain and what felt like golf ball sized raindrops, resulting in this day being less cheerful. As soon as we departed the mini buses we all frantically moved to put the waterproofs on before the rain soaked us to the bone. After 2 hours of navigating SSM, **WO2 Sherwin**, made the decision to get off the mountains as the weather was too poor to continue; news that was well received! After a quick look at the map to see how far we had to go to get to the mini bus and the fastest 6km to ever be completed started.

Day 3

4 Sqn OC **Maj Mortimore** joined for the day showing her support to already morale-drained troops from the previous day. The navigation was completely left to the group, who were given a start point and check points to reach, how we got to them was left entirely down to us. The day was a mix of death defying climbing for the first leg, with gusting winds trying to pull us off the mountain at every opportunity, to **Cpl Tait** managing to find every water filled hole with which to lose his leg in! After a day traversing the mountain area we all got back onto the minibuses which returned us to Sennybridge camp to eat dinner and plan the night navigation. This turned out to be a short distance to navigate however was time consuming due to the expected navigational errors sending us through large streams and boggy marshes. Through sheer determination the night nav was completed without incident.



SSgt Gopal check navigating

Day 4

The final day saw all navigation go smoothly. Everyone by this point was confident with the map as well as their pacing and timings. All check points were achieved with a good time and after almost a week of practise **Cpl Tait** finally learned to walk without falling down a hole, a useful skill to have developed.

In summary, the full week was a total success with everyone on the exercise benefiting from either improving map reading or getting away from the office for a change of scenery.

Exercise MERCURY BAG PACKER – by LCpl Cassell



On 4 April 14, our Troop Staffy, **SSgt Stevie Ware** took 611 (Comms Trg) Troop to Waitrose in Salisbury to raise money for the 'Micro and Anophthalmic Children's Society' (MACS) – the charity he is running this year's London Marathon for. MACS is the UK's national charity for children born without eyes or with underdeveloped eyes.

After posting **Cpl Tammy Williams** and **LCpl 'I'm an ETL' Chapman** on sentry at the store entrance, the remainder of us placed ourselves strategically at the end of each till. There we assisted customers with packing their shopping in return for kind donations. Official charity balloons and stickers were handed out to children and **Sgt Chris Jones** perfected a new skill of trolley pushing as he helped shoppers to their cars.

Cpl Stu Tait and **Cpl Pete Allen** were even pushing out press ups for notes that were donated. A cunning tactical manoeuvre which saw a lot more 'fivers' getting put in as the Waitrose customers 'kept up with the Jones'!

The Troop had a great day 'out of the garage' and enjoyed mixing with the friendly public and supermarket staff alike. The effort proved a success and helped raise the profile of the charity. It also gave our more 'junior' soldiers the experience of partaking in public fundraising events. Through our packing expertise, we managed to raise just shy of £2000, far more than we had expected! The total raised even managed to get a smile from **SSgt Ware!** Now we can all smile whilst we relax, put the TV on and watch him run the London Marathon!



Sgt Craig Smith helping the 'very' friendly customers of Waitrose



NEWS FROM FORMATIONS



11 SIGNAL BRIGADE



Comd **Brig Greg Wilson**
 COS **Maj Jamie Balfour**

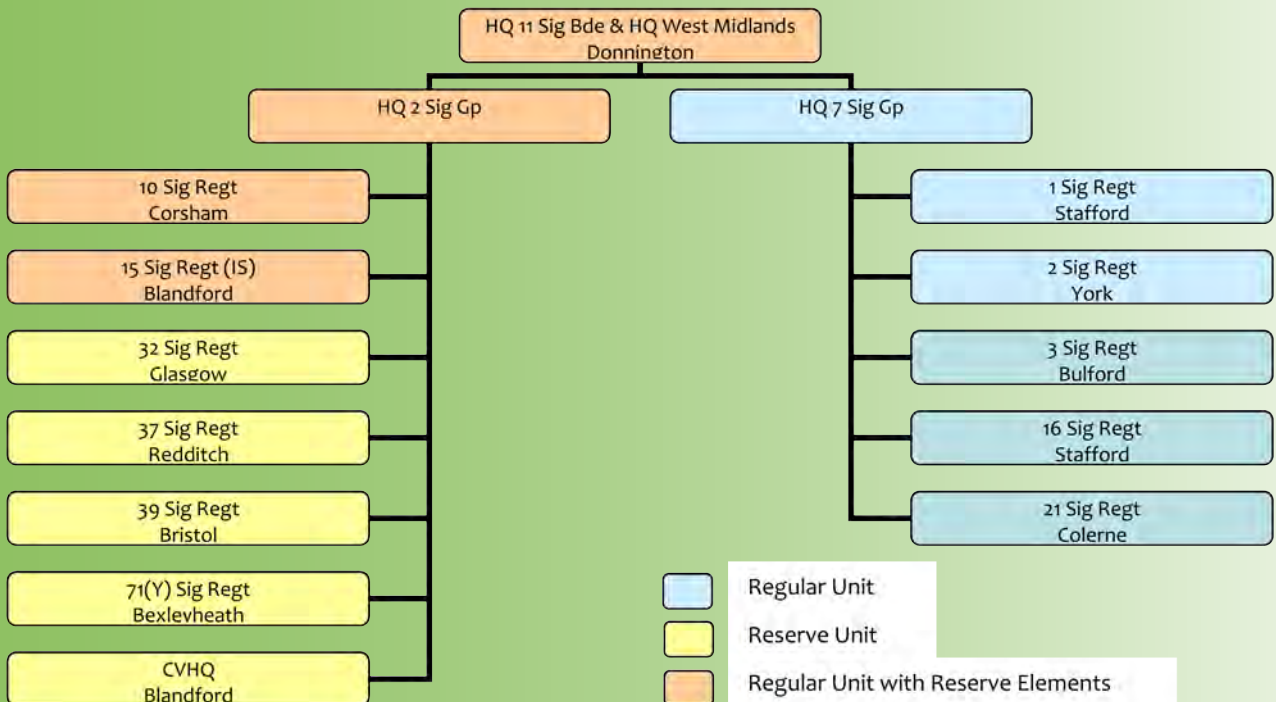
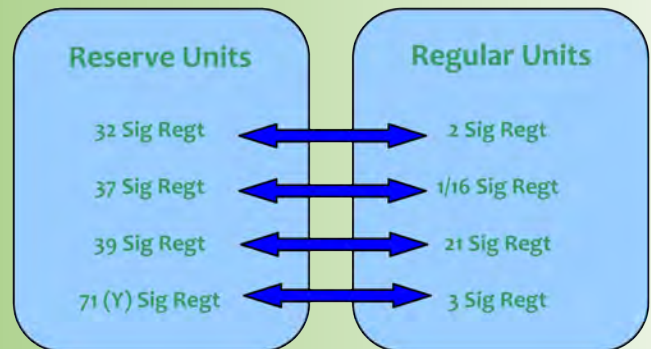
Beneath are two updates on recent HQ activities; one explains a major exercise to publicise the role of Force Troops Command and the other covers some morale that the Bde staff engaged in thanks to the efforts of our BEME, **Capt Simon Smith**. Arrivals and departures continue apace with some appointments starting to be filled for our future structure as the Bde HQ assumes responsibility for the West Midlands too from 1 Sep 14. This will see us merge with HQ 143 Bde from Shrewsbury and the all up strength of the Bde HQ increasing with an influx of military and civilian posts responsible for everything from Army Cadets to SFA housing allocation. As part of these changes we have traded in (up?) the Brigade Deputy Commander from an RAF Gp Capt to be an E2 (i.e. any Army capbadge) full Colonel and we will soon have further E2 posts in all areas of the HQ. **WO1 (YofS) Crowder** leaves the HQ and the Army after his 22+ years of service for a new start in civvy street where we wish him all the best. **Maj Yogi Cauldwell** has handed over his final set of jobs in the HQ to go on tour where we assume he will not be involved in operational record data management and other IT specialist tasks. Meanwhile **Capt Des McGuckian** leaves 2 Sig Gp to work on an appointment in social hand grenade testing for DE&S. He is replaced by **Capt Sam Smith** who has escaped the clutches of the RAF and is re-discovering what trouser twists are for.

Exercise GRIFFIN HERALD – by *Capt Gareth Davies*

GOC Force Troops Command (FTC) addresses the massed ranks of personnel in front of him within one of five capability

area ‘Bubbles’ on a windy Upavon Airfield and begins by setting the scene. As **Maj Gen T B Radford DSO OBE** opens with the line “I was in the shower”... a peculiar sense of disbelief and wonder pervades the audience wondering where this is going before the GOC returns us all to reality by explaining that it was while showering that he had come upon the idea of educating the Army on what FTC is and does it by means of an ‘Expo’.

Under A2020, FTC has been designed to deliver combat support, command support, combat service support and specialist support as required by joint, reaction and adaptable forces, as well as other government departments. The command will force generate and force prepare integrated regular and reserve capabilities to support training and operations, in line with operational requirements. FTC will become the largest of the Army’s formations, making up a third of the whole force. Consisting of nine functional brigades and the Engineer and Logistic Staff Corps, it will comprise of 115 units and formation headquarters, with



representation from 16 cap badges. FTC will hold 45% of all Land Forces equipment including approximately 550 armoured, 700 protected mobility and 4970 support vehicles. It is therefore important that commanders at all levels understand what FTC is and does. Ex GRIFFIN HERALD therefore, set out to explain who and what FTC is by demonstrating some of these numerous capabilities.

This idea of an expo was given a name and Ex GRIFFIN HERALD was born. Each of the brigades within FTC would demonstrate their capabilities under A2020 and in-keeping with this new model the expo was divided into five sections; the first three were the now familiar 'balls' from Gen Carter's Venn diagram, thus contingency, resilience and upstream capacity building with a fourth being command. The Vanguard field hospital was added as a fifth.

In Donnington the staff of 11 Sig Bde HQ tried to make sense of the requirement and to understand where we would fit, both doctrinally into the 'bubbles' and physically on the ground. With the wide variety of capability and nature of units that are under command of 11 Sig Bde, it was important to demonstrate that, as a formation, we reside within each bubble (less the Vanguard field hospital of course!) and also to showcase how integrated we have become between regular and reserve; our pairings have enabled a cohesion that has brought about a positive and proactive relationship between Regiments and can be seen in the diagram below:

From a Corps perspective it was important to demonstrate the new MRSR capability, the integration of regular and reserve units, the wide variety of niche capabilities that the Bde holds, as well as educating the audience on the significant changes that have taken place with 11 Sig Bde ORBAT due to the amalgamation with 143 (West Midlands) Brigade to absorb regional and Firm Base responsibilities.

More than a week ahead of the first visitors' day, units began arriving and occupying their areas within the huge hangar and large marquees that had been erected and formed the 'bubbles'. Over the course of the next few days more and more equipment and personnel poured into Upavon and slowly the huge hangar and marquees took shape. Comd 2 Sig Gp, **Col Simon Hutchinson**, was the bubble lead for the resilience bubble and therefore the Brigade was well represented here.

MRSRs were ably demonstrated, within the contingency bubble, by elements from 2 Sig Regt led by **WO2 (Yofs) Lutkin**, showing the services and applications that users could expect in a scalable, tactical and manoeuvrable brigade or divisional headquarters. 39 Sig Regt demonstrated the command support team capability that our reserve regiments hold and this was placed next to an incident response team demonstration provided by 251 Sig Sqn of 10 Sig Regt, within the resilience bubble. This nicely demonstrated the interaction and dependencies between our regular and reserve units and Op PITCHPOLE provided a useful example of where this model has been successfully used recently.

Some of our more bespoke capabilities were also represented; both 225 (ECM (FP)) Sig Sqn, within the contingency bubble and 241 Sig Sqn along with their sister squadron, 81 Sig Sqn, within the upstream capacity building bubble, brought a suite of capabilities that they deliver. **Sgt Jarvis** from 243 Sig Sqn frightened everyone with his display of covert surveillance equipment but reassured them subsequently with the Squadron's ability to detect such threats. **Maj Matthew Pemble** for the Land Information Assurance Group and **Alexandra Milne** from the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY) added extra colour and scope to the breadth of capability that 11 Sig Bde delivers.



Sgt Jarvis briefs Hd IS on the role of 243 Sig Sqn

Once the build and rehearsals were complete, the exercise really began with media day, where a wide cross section of press from national broadcasters and newspapers to local commercial radio stations and military magazines, were able to visit the stands and ask questions of those personnel manning them. Though a slightly fraught day, it passed off very successfully with FTC gaining positive, national coverage from both TV and radio.

The three visitor days followed, with the aim of internally educating the Army, including Saturday which was aimed at the Reserves and civilian employers. Each day, four groups would move around the four bubbles in rotation, having been received into the exercise and given an introductory brief by GOC FTC within the command bubble. Each day was very well received by those visiting the event and this positive reaction endorsed the effort that was put into the event by those units and personnel from around the Bde taking part. The Corps Colonel attended along with a past SOinC and other previous serving senior officers from the Corps. All were impressed with what they saw and with the way members of the Corps presented.



WO2 (Yofs) Lutkin briefs the Master of Signals on the capabilities of a MRSR

Following a shortened weekend the stands reconvened at lunchtime on Monday for the VIP day. This was led by Minister for the Armed Forces and CLF with a number of one and two star Generals making up the remainder of the audience. Once again the members of 11 Sig Bde who were representing their Regiments delivered excellent briefs and answered questions accurately and confidently to all delegates.



Following the conclusion of the VIP visit, the Project Manager gave an emotional thank you to all involved for a very successful event. It had exceeded the GOC's expectations and whilst it began as a 'one off' there was clearly already an appetite for a similar event to be held in the future.

The stands were then free to collapse their equipment and displays and return to their parent units. As is to be expected, this was achieved in record breaking time and if not for a 'broken down' RMP car (YofS – you know who you are!) within the resilience bubble, all but the armour, from the contingency bubble, would have departed by sundown. All of the 11 Sig Bde stands and personnel deserve praise. The event was a resounding success and all of those who played a part were a credit to their units and to the Corps.

Exercise ROMAN SKI 14 – The HQ 11 Sig Bde Ski trip to Bavaria – by WO1 (FofS) Waring

Nine members of the Bde staff departed Donnington on 4 Mar 14, embarking on a road trip to partake in 5 days skiing at the REME lodge in southern Germany. Thanks must go to **Capt Si 'I ski like an Austrian' Holmes** for organising this AT and to 16 Sig Regt for hosting us all at Elmpt station and providing the minibus for the second leg of the journey to Sonthofen. After 36 hours of travelling we finally arrived at the REME lodge, our home for the next 5 days.

Day 1 started well, we lied about our skiing abilities declaring ourselves as "ski Gods" and then duly split into our ability groups. **Capt Ian Flannery** was the only one with no ski experience and so he headed off to the nursery slopes to become competent at face planting whilst learning to snowplough. The remainder headed to the gondoliers to wait in the queue. It was German half term and hordes of families had taken to the slopes; all of whom would be amazed at our skiing ability! Our blushes were saved as visibility was poor allowing us all to gain our ski legs away from the watchful eyes of the locals. **Capt 'Dusty' Miller** must have received a different Admin Order to the rest of us as he decided to turn up in fancy dress wearing a ski outfit that was clearly in fashion in the early 80's when he learnt to ski. Locating him in the low cloud was not a problem; his bright garish outfit acted as a beacon to the group.

On day 2 all the groups moved to the larger slopes of the Fellhorn, visibility was perfect with clear blue skies. Ski conditions in the afternoon became difficult on the lower slopes, as the snow was soft and in places patchy. The

resulting falls and tumbles within the group was a great amusement to all and the difficult conditions exposed the lack of technique within the group. Day 3 can only be described as the day of the T-bar. Both **Brig Greg Wilson** and **Col Simon Hutchinson** demonstrated novel techniques in the use of the T-Bar. The Brigadier managed to lodge a ski pole between his legs getting on to the T-bar, to the cries of "nein, nein, nein" from the German lift operator. To his credit he managed to remove the pole without falling off. Not to be out done **Col Simon Hutchinson** demonstrated an alternative method of dismounting the T-bar, which resulted in him sliding 30m down the piste with skies and poles in tow.

The weather remained very good for days 4 and 5, with great skiing conditions in the morning with more challenging conditions in the afternoon on the lower slopes. Capt Name (no poles) Withheld decided that ski poles were of no use and became the official photographer for the group. Our "good" form was captured for critical review later and the urge to show off for the camera created great pictures. This included **Maj Jamie Balfour** who seemed eager to get back to his "airbourne" ways and ably demonstrated the wrong way to jump on skies.

Overall the week was very enjoyable and rewarding; those that had not achieved an SF1 qualification prior to this week were all successful in obtaining it. Techniques were honed, skiing abilities improved and the confidence to tackle black mogul fields almost achieved. Sochi here we come.



Ex ROMAN SKI 14: The Bde HQ participants (including Brig Wilson who has borrowed Roger Moore's original ski suit from the 1977 Bond classic – 'The Spy who loved me')



The Royal Signals Association
and
The Royal Signals Benevolent Fund

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... help others in their time of need

That work continues today and every year we help hundreds of those who have fallen on hard times whether it be a serving Signaller who has been injured on operations, the families of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, members of the Corps who need help with specialist medical care for their children or veterans who need help in maintaining their mobility and independence.

We don't distinguish between Regular, TA, National Service, ex-ATS or WRAC who served with the Corps, officer or soldier and their dependants; any case brought to us will be considered with expert support from SSAFA, The Royal British Legion and the Army Benevolent Fund. We will help whenever we can ... and you can help too, by leaving a legacy in your will. Its simple to do and can make all the difference to someone who has worn the same capbadge and who may not have been as lucky as you. If you would like to make a difference, please contact the Association who will tell you how to leave a legacy so that others from the Corps might benefit from your generosity.



NEWS FROM REGIMENTS



1st (UNITED KINGDOM) ARMoured DIVISION HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL REGIMENT HERFORD



CO Lt Col J G Hill
RSM WO1 (RSM) Mears

Regimental Swimming Gala – by LCpl Sym

The Regimental swimming gala got underway before the pool was even in sight, with the teams sizing each other up and light hearted banter between **Lt Mason** and **Sgt Ashcroft**.

On arriving at the pool the team captains were briefed that some of the events would be shorter than previously stated, this news getting a sigh of relief from many of the competitors, namely **Sig Crook** who was originally entered into the 200m medley event.

After a warm up the first event, the '50m Freestyle' got underway and was comfortably won by **LCpl Bradfield** putting 200 Sig Sqn into an early lead. The second event of the day was the 100m Freestyle won by **Lt Mason** (although the results say otherwise) with **Sig Royals** taking 4th place to the applause of all the competitors. **Sgt Holdsworth** surprised everyone to take 1st place in the 50m Breaststroke, beating a Corps Swimmer in the process. **Cpl Stewart** came 1st in the 50m Backstroke, helping 200 Sig Sqn maintain their grip on the top spot. A false start in the 25m Butterfly had three of the swimmers do a 'warm up' length before the race, this had no effect on the outcome which saw **Sgt Ashcroft** pale to his younger rival **Sig Walker** who took the win by just under a second. The final individual event of the day was the 4x25m Individual Medley, a difficult event for many, won by **LCpl Sym** with **Sig Crooke** putting in an outstanding effort, finishing in 4th position.

At the end of the individual events only one point separated 1st and 2nd team places, meaning it was all to play for in the relays. 0.3 of a second was the separation between the 211 and 200 times in the 4x50m Freestyle Relay. **Lt Mason, LCpl De Main, Sig Bagley** and **Sig Walker** from 211 were happy to steal the top spot from 200.



1ADSR swimmers

LCpl Hurry, LCpl De Main, LCpl Sym and **Sig Bagley** opened up an impressive lead for 211 in the 4x50m Breaststroke, winning by 22 seconds, followed by HQ Squadron led by **Sgt Ashcroft**. The final race of the day was the 4x25m Medley Relay, won by 211 with 2nd and 3rd places separated by 0.2 of a second.

The day ended with the results and prize giving. In 4th place with 19 points was 201 Signal Squadron (to busy preparing to go to war), 3rd place was HQ Squadron with 26 points, runners up were 200 Signal Squadron with 33 points, but clear winners on the day were 211 Signal Squadron with 42 points in the bag and another trophy for the cabinet.



LCpl Sym accepting the trophy on behalf of 211 Sig Sqn

200 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC Maj N Pryce-Jones
RSM WO1 (RSM) Revell

Exercise MERCURY SNOW RIDER – by Sig Brown

On Saturday 1 March six members of 200 Sig Sqn departed Sennelager to begin Ex MERCURY SNOW RIDER V, the Royal Signals annual Snowboarding camp held in Rauris, Austria. The camp catered for all experience levels and began with a week of instruction from the Dutch snow boarding company, Ripstar, before progressing onto a week of competitions including parallel giant slalom, boarder cross and slope style. After a long 12 hour drive the team arrived at the Schlonblick mountain resort. Much to our delight we were greeted with a large modern apartment with views of the slopes and access to a gym, spa and restaurant – it was clear straight away it was going to be a fun 2 weeks!

As the week progressed the improvement in the riders was obvious, especially amongst the novice riders who began progressing onto the 'grown-up' slopes further up the



mountain. Whilst the novices were busy learning to turn without falling, the intermediate and advanced groups started to practice their jumping techniques ready for the slope style competitions the following week.

Before long the end of the week had arrived and it was time to transition from instruction to competition. The final day of instruction ended with a fancy dress party to thank the Ripstar instructors for their patience and hard work throughout the week.

The competitions started on the Sunday with seeding races for the parallel giant slalom. The novice riders from 200 Signal Squadron raced well with **Lt Gavin Baynes**, **Sig Matt Harmon** and **Sig Marshall Hall** all qualifying for the knock out championships the following day. Competition amongst the novice riders was high and after a long day of competitive racing **Lt Gavin Baynes** managed to secure a bronze medal for the 200 Signal Squadron team.

As race week progressed it was time for the slope style event and although many of the competitors had never attempted this before they rose up to the challenge putting together some impressive if not unique runs. The main part of the week for most was the boarder cross event that consisted of four riders racing the same track at the same time! The trip finished with a prize giving ceremony on the Friday night followed by a team meal and a good night's rest before the long 12 hour return journey the next day!



The 200 Sig Sqn Team, 'God, I wish I looked that good in shades!'

Exercise SWIM THE CHANNEL – by Sig 'Steve' Davies

At 200 Sig Sqn the work comes thick and fast for a small Communications Troop, so the maintenance of morale, and the upkeep of physical fitness is extremely important. On 23 March **Sig 'Kenty' Kent** from Tigris Troop organised a charity swimming event for 10 available Squadron personnel; the challenge of swimming the equivalent distance of the English Channel. We met at Talbot Barracks guardroom where we set off towards a local swimming pool in Paderborn town.

The swimmers went around the Squadron raising support for the charity Help for Heroes by asking people to guess how long it would take for a team of 10 men to swim the full length of the English Channel. This was broken down into a relay

style event with each swimmer travelling 10% of the distance, equating to 71 lengths. The person guessing closest to the time would win a bottle of port.

On arrival, and after seeing the length of the Olympic sized pool, it started to dawn on us that this might not be as easy an undertaking as we predicted. Everyone booked in and began to psych themselves up ready for the swim. The experienced swimmers amongst the group brought their own goggles and watches to accurately time their laps. We all swam at the same time as we had 3 hours pool time in total to swim the entire distance between us, and after the first hour it was obvious why we needed 10 swimmers!

The first hour past relatively quickly as people were going as fast through the water as they could, **LCpl 'Get Them Rounds Down' Ewen** almost shot through the water and surprised himself as he swam past us. With the onset of fatigue the second hour passed very slowly, with other members of the Troop finishing their set legs of the distance. The event became hard, but we were all massively motivated to continue with the support of our faster team mates and with the memory of why we were doing this in the first place.

Overall it was a fun and challenging event and to round it all off, we have €240 pledged to Help for Heroes.

Congratulations to **Sig 'Splash-croft' Ashcroft**, who guessed the closest guess of 18hrs 30mins total time, just 12mins 20secs out.

Enjoy the Port, and please drink responsibly... as you usually do.

200 Signal Squadron MATT Week – by Cpl Bennett

200 Signal Squadron wasted no time at all kick starting MATTs as soon as practicable organised by our Training Wing **Sgt Richie Andrews**. Monday was an ideal opportunity for the new OC Sqn **Maj Pryce-Jones** to give his opening address and grab the busy members of the Squadron whilst he could before the looming deployment date in a matter of weeks.

It wouldn't be a MATTs week without a PFA, and so it was a glorious day as the Corps lined up, the majority managed a pass, some even managed a 300 Club position. We then needed some navigational skills taught by **Sgt Bob Rankin** to ensure that we could read a map and get lost, I mean, actually place ourselves in an advantageous position, next BLS.

Sgt Jay Shone hit the barrel from the go with BCDT, then hit the training area just short of the Squadron lines. We were



Sgt Shones Mass Cas training package



split down into multiples in order to assess what the soldiers had taken in. A bit more pressure added to the situation being assessed not only on our ability to triage and treat casualties but on the command and control element. Everyday is a training day as **LCpl 'Pricey' Price** found out, realising the attributes required of a JNCO and the complexity of controlling a simple situation.

An early start on day 3 ready to complete the ACMT, some good shooting was had by all, the targets if anything were very afraid.

The penultimate day consisted of MATT 9 conducted by **Sgt Jay Shone** and **Cpl Mark Stewart**. Once more the weather was against us again with the 22^o sun shining through the windows of the lecture room. **Sgt Richie Andrews** made best effort to enthuse the audience and keep us alert with some visualisation and role playing.

The week finally drew to a close with some quality training leading into deployment, allowing the Squadron to build upon their knowledge and move forward better for it.

201 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj A Stannard**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Scarcliff**

Exercise PREMIER KUSH 2 – by Sig Hinton

Between the 21st and 29th of March, Sennelager Training Area was home to 201 Sig Sqn and elements from 1 (UK) ADSR, conducting valuable training for our imminent deployment to Afghanistan in May. On Friday we deployed down to the area and moved into Camp Bastion and Kabul, both of which had somehow miraculously appeared in the Sennelager Training Area. Once into location and comfortable we moved into a shift pattern with security scenarios and lessons such as reaction to IDF, Guardian Angel, Op CITADEL and sangar duties. The Training Wing's main focus was to teach and test us in these areas to ensure our drills were second to none before we deploy.

First we had lessons from a super keen **Sgt Tony Richard** on Guardian Angel, the insider threat and Op CARDEL with others that were specific for Afghanistan and the threat that we are going to face. Once the lessons were finished we were expected to then be able to react to events the following day as taught. This started with reaction to IDF as we were all asleep, with **Sgt 'Wookie' Sidorowicz** bounding into the room screaming 'get on the floor this is IDF' which resulted with a semi conscious, very large **Cpl 'Bushy' Bush** rolling from the top bunk of his bed and using a very unfortunate **LCpl Wright** as a nice soft landing.

A number of serials later, the exercise finished with a complex attack on the location which got **2Lt 'Newbie' Wolfe** very



PREMIER KUSH DS and enablers

excited giving him an excuse to get out the office and get stuck in, leading the defence of the camp.

Once the exercise had finished the overjoyed troops from Kabul arrived back looking very wet and very cold but this didn't deter **SSgt 'Goose' Barn** with his large smile and large untamed exercise moustache looking like he wanted to do it all again.

All in all it was a very productive week and a massive learning curve for those who have never been to Afghanistan. The Squadron is now more ready than ever and itching to deploy.

211 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj T Moran**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Tiplady**

SPECK TASK TROOP

'Riding the Battleaxe' – by LCpl Lea

Ahead of Easter leave **LCpl 'Smudge' Smith** was tasked with arranging some Troop bonding in the form of a 'leisurely' mountain bike ride in the Harz Mountains. Having recce'd the route the previous weekend and overcome the extensive paperwork we set off on a sunny Thursday morning on the 2½ hour drive from Herford along with several other members of the Squadron.

Arriving in the picturesque area, several of the group noticed that whichever direction we were going to head in seemed to head upwards...I mean really, really upwards! Undeterred(ish), we hired the additional bikes needed and headed off into the wilderness. Barely 800m in **LCpl 'Sully' Sullivan** snapped his chain, so in the spirit of teamwork and camaraderie we left him and **Sig Clough** whilst we headed further towards to the mighty Brocken. After a steady climb for the first half an hour we turned a corner to reveal what can only be described as a cliff! The challenge to remain in the saddle all the way to the top was given - and duly failed by all but a few of the group.

After a few more cheeky hills we arrived at the Brocken summit, altitude 1,140m, to have a well deserved rest and a bite to eat (absolutely no beer was consumed!) before heading downwards, or plummeting more like. The braver (or more foolhardy) of the group sped down at breakneck speed, while the older **LCpl Lea** and considerably less bold **LCpl Sullivan** had our rear brakes jammed on the whole way!

At the bottom of the trail we hand railed around a lake before a few of the lads decided that a dip was required... in water that was more than a little nippy and a very strange and probably unhealthy shade of red! Another 6km of arduous riding saw us return to our start point and a much needed ice cream. Twenty seven km had been covered with around twenty of those being uphill 'Cheers Smudge!', but a great day was had by all and only minor chafing had been inflicted!

Exercise BATTLE AXE SKILLS

Tac Troop has been extremely busy over the course of the year, especially during a Troop level exercise BATTLE AXE SKILLS 1 which enabled us to spread our wings and do some serious training.

The Troop **SSgt SSgt Wood** and Tp OC, **Lt Archambeau** planned an excellent package over the course of the week. The schedule was jam packed with lessons including GPMG, rifle drills, field craft, a package of basic military skills and not forgetting we are Royal signals communicators, a great deal of comms chucked in for good measure,



The comms phase was lead by **Cpl ‘comms God’ Eaves** who drew on his vast operational experience and led the Troop through a spot map lesson with radio traffic pumped through a speaker to simulate a busy ops room. **LCpl ‘top tech’ Crammond** and the newly arrived **LCpl Hurry** managed to put together an excellent orienteering exercise which included taking selfies at prominent landmarks in order to ensure that honest men remained honest! There was also a mock exercise and orders phase where the Signallers, most of whom are in their first unit got stuck into the process. The exercise was centred on a rapid deployment of armour to provide a robust network to help out the emergency services during the floods. The soldiers took to this slightly different scenario with enthusiasm and it ended up being a great success.



Sig ????

The post exercise reports were positive and although the guys and girls were knackered they seemed to enjoy it immensely, including **Sig ‘loudmouth’ Lang**, who for once was too tired to comment.



Cpl Masson leading the Comd Tasks

MAIN TROOP

In the previous 6 months we deployed on Ex FREE FLIGHT to Sennelager Training Area, conducting a build of a Silver HQ. Key to the continuing morale of the troops during this exercise were **Sig Meetuns’** impression of Miley Cyrus, and the mighty **LCpl Mitchell** managing to jack knife and crash a Land Rover all in one exercise. Followed by **Cpl Burns** misplacing his beret at ENDEX.

We then established a second Silver HQ, although this time it was for the SAFFA Christmas function, where the Troop was put to good use throughout the day's events. We've had to say goodbye to a few people, notably **Cpl Abbot** and **Sig Willis**, where we bade them farewell with a meal out, to an all-you-can-eat Mongolian restaurant. It's not all work and no play in Main Troop, we managed to find time for some AT. **Sig Hood** and I went to Rauris, in Austria, snowboarding for 2 weeks, with **Sig Wooley**, **Sig Nye** and **Sig Rennie** gaining Ski Foundation qualifications during this period.

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

OC **Maj L Crossing**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Anderson**

As the Regiment continues its preparations for Op HERRICK 20 the Squadron will ONLY see around 30 personnel deploy, however the vast majority of the Squadron have still been involved in some way through its support to 201 Sig Sqn throughout MST. During the same period members of the Squadron have been taking advantage of one of the last winters we will spend in BFG by indulging in a variety of winter sports.

Alongside the annual Ex SNOW WARRIOR programme run by HQ BFG we have also sent teams to take part in the Corps Alpine, Nordic and Snow Boarding competitions. Of particular note were **Capt ‘Dangerous’ Dave Malortie** being selected to represent the Corps at Snow Boarding whilst **WO2 (RQMS) Mark ‘Tank’ Anderson** brought novice alpine silverware back to Herford. Concurrent to these competitions the management of the Regiment found time to deploy to Bavaria on Ex MANSKI. The world was put to rights over the week and some skiing was achieved as well! The award for best endeavour went to novice skier **Maj Leigh Crossing** who became known as the red rocket due to the red jacket he wore all week. Unfortunately **Maj Crossings** speed downhill was not a matter of skill, rather that he couldn't slow himself by turning and therefore headed straight downhill in an out of control style. It was pure luck he didn't break a leg and he has vowed never to ski again!

In addition to the well enjoyed winter sports the Squadron has also enjoyed a battlefield tour to Berlin organised by **Sgt ‘best endeavour’ Sam Wilkinson**. The trip provided an education to the younger members of the Squadron by looking at both the final days of the Nazi regime and the Cold War period. A good night out was had by all as the sights and sounds of Berlin were explored – without incident! Currently the Squadron is working hard to prepare the Regiment for looming Combined Assurance Week following Easter Leave and has been boosted by recent promotion news; **SSgt Jo Cordery** was selected for promotion to WO2, and **Sgt Greg ‘extras’ Ward**, and **Sgt Tony ‘Tough Guy noi’ Richard** were selected for promotion to SSgt.

REGIMENTAL GENERATOR BAY - by Sig Crooke

RGB SSgt **SSgt Al Winter**

In the RGB there's been a lot going on since January as we had **LCpl Hodgen** come back from his Class One course in Blandford. January's main effort was support to Ex PASHTUN PANTHER for 3 months in the UK. This was led by **LCpl Hodgen**, **Sig Cardwell**, **Sig Smith** and **Sig Herbert**. Various members of the RGB went skiing in February whilst others took advantage of the Squadron trip to Berlin.

March has seen most of the RGB deploy to Sennelager Training Area at some point to support Ex PREM KUSH and ROMAN PASHTUN. More recently the whole RGB has deployed to the UK to enable the power build for Ex PASHTUN DAWN at Westdown Camp and will return en mass at endex to deconstruct the build. While they do all the hard work in the UK **LCpl Amanda Turnbull** goes off to the Corps football training camp back in Bulford.

More recently we have lost 3 big members of the team in **Sig Gav Mcblain** and **Sig Ryan Connelly** who both went off to 2 Signal Regt as LCpls, and **LCpl ‘power to the Corps’ Jack Kernohan** going to 14 Signal Regt. But with people going we gain two newly promoted LCpls in **LCpl Byford** and **LCpl Edwards**, both from 3 Div Sig Regt.



REGIMENTAL TRAINING WING

RTSM **WO2 (SSM) Savage**
SSI **SSgt Reddy.**

Exercise **BERLIN LOOK** – by Sgt Wilkinson

As a break from the norm, it was decided that 27 members of HQ Squadron would take two days out of work for a Battlefield Tour to Berlin to commemorate the 100 year anniversary of the start of World War 1, by visiting places which were pinnacle in both WW2 and The Cold War. We went straight in to seeing various sites where Russian Troops made their way through Berlin in 1945 with our tour guide, Retd Col Robin Greenham.



At the British embassy, 'now how do I get one of these posting...?'

During the afternoon of the first day however, we were given the opportunity to visit the British Embassy and receive a brief from the Defence Attaché. The building in the centre of Berlin was impressive to say the least, and not just because it was round the corner from our friends the Russians! We finished the day by visiting the Reichstag Building (German Parliament)



In front of the Brandenburg Gate

which was the scene of the Russians raising their flag over the building, however this didn't signal the end of the fighting. It continued for a further 2 days, and 2,700 Russians lost their lives over 300m of land!

On the night we all decided to go for a group meal in the district of Hackescher Markt in the East of Berlin, close to our accommodation. This was made a lot easier after one of the locals started shouting "12 inch pepperoni 5 euros", triggering something disturbingly similar to the Allies rush for Berlin itself towards the somewhat horrified pizza man. The second day was just as fast and furious as the first, taking in such places as Hitler's Bunker (now a car park!), Stasi Prison (a harrowing place where anti-communists were taken and held without a sentence passed!) and the Brandenburg Gate to name a few. It was an intense two days taking in lots of information, especially for some of the younger members of the group, who after the first day kept asking why our tour guide kept talking about the Russians and not the British in Berlin! A few history lessons may be in order for the future!



2nd SIGNAL REGIMENT YORK



CO **Lt Col Hargreaves**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Mason**

219 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Rose**
SS **WO2 (SSM) Blowes**

Squadron Overview – by Lt H Joseph

219 Signal Squadron remains a hive of activity; the main focus of the Squadron has been on implementing Falcon, through

the FALTAT process which has begun in earnest this month. Prior to the arrival of FALTAT, crew experience was limited to some basic equipment maintenance but this did not stop the Squadron organising and executing training on setting up installations in the field. Ex CHIMERA WARRIOR highlighted the challenges involved in moving vehicles, even across relatively benign terrain, and the logistics of establishing a small HQ. Having spent time preparing bespoke camouflage netting for the vehicles and conducting lengthy equipment checks it was a great pleasure to finally see the Squadron perform tactical moves by day and night, introducing the more junior soldiers to field routine. With detachment crews



Falcon Troop's Antenna Field during Ex CHIMERA THUNDER



trained, the Troops have spent recent weeks on In-Barracks Data Preparation (IBDP) which will set conditions for the first field exercise, TETHERED FLIGHT.

While preparation for and deployment on exercise have occupied the majority of the Squadron's manpower, it has also taken the lead for this year's Race The Sun competition. The event has this year drawn twenty-eight teams from across the Army, including Reserve and Joint Service units. (There is even a contingent of Dutch Marines taking part!) Race The Sun will take place on 29 May and is set to be another action-packed day, which will surely provide another instalment in the next copy of *The Wire*.

2 Signal Regiment CO's Cup Hockey Tournament – by Lt J Ingold

March saw the latest round of the ongoing Commanding Officer's cup competition. This time the Squadrons crossed swords (or sticks) over hockey. Starting in bright sunshine, surprise package 246 Ghurka Signal Squadron won the first group game against 219 Squadron, the winning goal coming courtesy of an outrageous deflection. After Support Squadron dispatched 214 Squadron in the second game, and shared a robustly contested draw with 246, they seemed to be setting an early pace.

214 meanwhile offered 219 a lifeline into the final after losing to them in a tight contest. **Capt Jim Collins** inspired his team with constructive and measured encouragement throughout the game but was not able to make up for the accurate finishing of **Cpl Dean** who led the 219 line. Meanwhile a large crowd gathered on the touchline to cheer on crowd favourites 246 whose liberal interpretation of the rules of hockey ensured that their games provided the utmost entertainment. 219 Squadron were by now gathering momentum and were only a win away from a place in the final. Standing in their way was a match against Support (AKA the North Yorkshire Derby) which would later become known as the Second Battle of Fulford. The match remained finely balanced until late in the second half when **Lt Josh Ingold** picked up the ball on the right hand side, rounded several opponents before unleashing a fierce shot which fizzed past the keeper and into the bottom corner. Whilst other versions as to the exact nature of the goal may abound the result was undeniable – 219 were into the final!

The final, between 219 and 246, was contested in heavy rain. The match was evenly balanced with both sides spurning glorious chances to take the lead. With half time approaching, 246 were the fastest to react following a spectacular flying save by 219 keeper **Cpl Dixon**, and took the lead. 219 threw everything at 246 in the second half. At one point it is said that a real proverbial kitchen sink was seen in possession and bearing down on the 246 goal only to be denied by their steadfast back line. The final whistle drew wild scenes in the crowd as 246 were crowned 2 Signal Regiment (Hockey 7s) champions. A fantastic day was had by all and special thanks must go to **Cpl Briggs** from the QM Dept for her excellent umpiring during some tough clashes. The Regt now awaits the next event which is Athletics (and can only hope the write-up is as exciting if not perhaps slightly more grounded – UPO).

Corps Boxing Coaching Camp Held at 2 Signal Regiment: Imphal Bks - by LCpl Jones

From 16 – 20 December 2013, with the majority of personnel having already left for Christmas leave, a select few, keen individuals took part in a Corps-wide boxing coaching course held at 2 Signal Regiment. It had been identified that the Corps lacked qualified boxing coaches and a suitable course was organised to meet this requirement. This was a fantastic

opportunity for potential coaches to gain the qualifications needed to start up and train a Regimental team.

On the first morning we met our instructors, **Mr Chris Bessey MBE** and **Sgt Tony Davis** RAPT, both highly qualified and well regarded on the Team GB coaching circuit. Firstly, the course covered boxing rules and regulations - there are a lot to learn in amateur boxing generally and with new rules coming in to force from 1 Apr 14 we all had to pay close attention!

Then came the part we had all been waiting for - the physical lessons. Throughout the week we learned how to design and run skills lessons and fitness circuits, were given advice on diets for boxers and on how to get the best out of a potential boxer and develop them further. Each member of the syndicate took turns as the coach and numerous turns as the student.

On the final day, everyone was assessed on what they had learned and were given tailored advice on how to improve for the future. The course was a massive success with everyone passing and leaving with an understanding of how to coach a team. Each student received their Part One Boxing Coaching Certificate and were released into the world of Army Boxing.



The 2 Sig Regt boxing squad

Army (North) Individuals Boxing Championship – 5 – 8 Mar 14

2 Sig Regt boxing team had engaged in full time trg since Jan in preparation for a one off boxing competition against 30 Sig Regt, with the aim of injecting boxing back into the Regiments DNA.

During this period, the opportunity arose to enter the Army (N) Individual Boxing Championship, a competition in its first year. On entry, it became apparent that this was to be a two unit competition - 2 Sig Regt v 2 Mercians with one boxer, **Sig Shanice James**, representing 21 Sig Regt, who trained with 2 Sig Regt throughout.

The whole team got through the prelims unscathed with five boxers from the 2 Sig Regt team making it to the finals. The 8 Mar 14 finally arrived, the team travelled from York that morning for the weigh-in and medicals were passed with ease - so far so good. .

By 1800hrs that evening, all guests had arrived and the first bout was about to begin. **Sig 'The' Shah** was representing 2 Sigs against a much taller Mercian opponent. **Sig Shah** boxed bravely and fought with great determination against the more experienced boxer. Unfortunately, his opponent's size and experience gave him the edge and he lost on a split decision.





Sig 'The' Shah fought bravely against a taller, more experienced opponent

Next up was **LCpl Amy Cassidy** boxing **Sig Shanice James** representing 21 Sig Regt. This was a bout that demonstrated all the qualities required from a boxer. **LCpl Cassidy** demonstrated true grit against a taller, more powerful **Sig James**. Despite this, **LCpl Cassidy** kept going forward but was eventually beaten, again as a result of a split decision, with the whole crowd standing to show their appreciation for a fantastically fought bout.

Next up was **Sig 'Danger' Griffiths** at Welter Weight. It was evident that the 2 Mercian Welter Weight was one of their stars and the pressure was on **Sig Griffiths**. From the first bell he took the fight to the Mercian Boxer - boxing in a classic style, guard up tight, straight punches and with an iron will. This classic style and determination brought a majority

decision win to 2 Sig Regt. The Welter Weight bout was to be the decider should a draw between the two units occur.

Sig 'The Reach' Quinn entered the ring next. Being over 6ft 4 he dwarfed his opponent at Light Heavy. 'Knock Out' first round - **Sig Quinn** stopped his opponent.

2 Sigs were now in the lead.

The final bout of the night was a Cruiser Weight between **Sig 'Gypsy' O'Brien** and what can only be described as the hardest looking man in the competition - he was in the Cruiser Weight division by 100 grams. The 2 Mercian boxer came at **Sig O'Brien** like a man possessed, determined to end the bout early. However, an early shower was not in the game plan for 2 Sig Regt. **Sig O'Brien** stood up to the onslaught and fought back as best he could. Despite being pushed around the ring for two rounds **Sig O'Brien** stuck it out and faced everything that was thrown at him. By the third round the 2 Mercian boxer had run out of steam. **Sig O'Brien**, although beaten up, made a come back and nearly stopped the 2 Mercian boxer in the third. By this point the whole crowd were shouting for the 2 Sig Regt novice boxer. When the decision was broadcast in favour of 2 Mercian the crowd were in uproar. This was the bout of the night.

Although there were only four bouts directly between 2 Sig Regt and 2 Mercians, the Signals took the trophy thanks to **Sig 'Danger' Griffiths** beating his opponent in the Welter Weight decider.

The 2014/2015 season will see 2 Sig Regt returning to Altcar Barracks to defend their title, only this time we will be stronger, fitter and more experienced. Watch out any team who enters the Army (N) Individuals Boxing Championship.



202 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj C Dixon**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) G Davies**

Exercise BUFFALO EAGLE – by Capt Hutchings

With numerous exercises on the horizon and many trade courses ongoing, Overloon Troop took advantage of a rare gap in the planner and disappeared to Newquay for a week's adventure training. The plan was to take the team rock climbing with **Sgt Mike Paynter** before being put through their mountain biking paces by **Sgt Andrew Latusek**. The group would spend 2 days on each activity before enjoying the final day coasting in the lovely warm Cornish sea.

The first day was spent on the indoor climbing wall as the weather outside was anything but ideal. It quickly became apparent that some people were picking it up quicker than others. **LCpl Aaron Waller** appeared to require no climbing technique whatsoever and chose to rely instead on simply heaving himself up with his freak like arms. Meanwhile **Sig Fisher** manoeuvred himself across the wall in an unnatural manner. The second day we took our new found climbing skills to Roche where **Sig Jones** proved that it is possible to hang off a rock face for 30 minutes and not get more than a foot off the ground!

By day three the team was certainly ready for a change of activity so it fell to **Sgt Latusek** to lead us in the ancient art of mountain biking. We went to Cardinham Woods where there was a variety of trails to take us from basic skills right up to some cheeky red routes. It was only towards the end of the second day that **Cpl Edwards** realised that being in top gear for the entire day was both tiring and not the easiest way of getting around!

The final day was spent coasting which was a great idea for mid February as the sea water was lovely and luke warm throughout. With the whole team feeling a little tentative the then **Lt Hutchings** was volunteered to go first and promptly showed everyone how not to jump in. As the day went on the cold was soon forgotten about and all began to enjoy their time in the ocean. **Sig Jones** made a reappearance standing at the top of a cliff and after some coaxing successfully made the jump. Once dry and changed the team made haste for Bulford ready to continue the Regiment's task of re rolling to become a Multi Role Signal Regiment.

Op PITCHPOLE

"Valentine's Day" Rescue – by Lt GN Banting

On 14 February 2014 80 soldiers from 202 Signal Squadron deployed to McMullen Barracks, Marchwood near



Southampton to provide assistance with the floods to the local civilian authorities.

As soon as we arrived in Marchwood a 22 strong group, predominantly from Waterloo Troop, deployed to Lymington Fire Station to provide assistance to the civilian emergency services. A tidal surge was due to hit areas along the coast, expected to reach its peak at 2300hrs.

At about 2130hrs calls started to come in to the emergency services that about 30 civilians were trapped in the Marine Café in Milford on Sea. The sea had risen over the sea wall and had flooded the restaurant submerging the entire ground floor. On top of this the waves were crashing over the top of the restaurant and due to the large debris were shattering the windows one by one. The Police, who were in charge of the operation, were unsure that even with the high axle clearance of our vehicles, whether or not we would be able to reach the restaurant as the conditions along the sea front were treacherous.

Our two TCVs, driven by **Sig James** and **Sig Wilson** with **Lt Banting**, **LCpl Brooks**, **LCpl Scott** and **Sig Harland** onboard were guided by police escort from Lymington to the RV. The Marine Police and Coastguard met us at this point and we were already seeing flooding and extremely high winds at the location despite it being fairly sheltered from the sea front. Conditions were deteriorating, the tide had risen and the road to the restaurant was impassable by foot. The emergency services were unsure exactly how deep the water now was, however the priority was to extract the vulnerable civilians so we set off from the RV at 2250 as conditions were getting to their worst. The wind was relentless and as we got closer to the restaurant conditions worsened with increasing airborne debris. We were not only battling the wind but also the sea water which was now surrounding the building along with the waves which were crashing against the TCV. Then to make the situation more complicated a sea defence boulder that had been lifted into the road by the sea was now obstructing the vehicles. The driver, **Sig James**, was not confident the TCV could pass. Luckily the Marine Police were able to dismount the vehicle and move the boulder out the way. However, as the vehicle was stationary for a prolonged period of time, persistent battering by the waves and debris caused the driver side window to smash. **Sig James** quickly improvised a plastic covering to provide limited protection.

As we waited for the obstacle to be removed the devastation caused by the storm became more apparent. The scattering of cars on the far side of the road was a clear indication of how forceful the current and how powerful the waves were. They had clearly been washed away from where they were originally parked and the majority only had a couple of windows intact. Once the obstruction was cleared we then carried on through the worsening conditions to the far side of the restaurant where we hoped we could get to the diners. **Sig James** carefully manoeuvred the vehicle through the raging current in what used to be a car park, made exceptionally difficult by the shingle and boulders brought in by the sea. Once the vehicle was close enough to the building the Marine Police and coastguard were able to start the evacuation.

We managed to fit 20 of the diners into the back of the TCV but needed to perform another run to retrieve the remaining 12. **Sig James** drove a second time rescuing the remaining diners with no issues and took them straight to Lymington for medical treatment.

The conditions we were up against were extremely dangerous and it was very fortunate that our vehicles were able to reach the restaurant and the stranded Valentine's Day diners, assisted by the expert driving skills of **Sig James**.



The Valentine's Day rescue team

Recce Team India 11 Stories – by SSgt K Bickford

Members of 202 Squadron deployed on the evening of 14 Feb 2014 after a week of high readiness and false alarms.

On 14 Feb 2014 at approximately 2300hrs **Cpl Matthews** and myself spotted two horses running down a country lane near Lepe whilst conducting a recce of the area, it was clear to see the recent storms must have startled them. It was dark and the weather was horrendous, a recipe for disaster. It took us about 25 minutes to catch them by foot. Once we had done so we placed them in to a field and closed the gate to secure them.

A tidal surge consisting of the usually expected 4.4ft high tide plus an extra 1.5ft caused by the poor weather produced a rise of 5.9 ft causing a lot of localised flooding and damage down by the Beaulieu river mouth and places like Lepe. A local described it as the worst weather he'd seen in 48 years, although I think he may have only been 35 years old.



Loading sand bags onto the MAN SV for flood defence building

Kings Worthy was an area also hit badly by flooding and this was mainly due to two factors; firstly water running off the high ground and secondly a lot of ground water springs popping up. This was plain to see on one particular street called "Springvale Road". Springs were appearing below



people's houses causing them to flood. All the drains being blocked didn't help. Out of 26 drains only 3 were working. In the end we deployed soldiers to this location to help with sandbagging outside houses to protect them from the bow waves caused every time a vehicle drove down the main road. I think we moved over 1,000 sandbags in this location. Its worth noting that sandbags will not stop water, however they are used to channel it. The trouble we had – was where do we channel it to?

Another task given to my 3 man, or should I say 2 man and 1 woman recce team (Cpl Matthews, LCpl Burton and I) was to assist the Environment Agency in gauging the rivers. So armed with waders and prodding sticks we were ready to go, but lucky for us at the 10th hour Gold Command stopped us from entering the rivers as we lacked the specialist training and the risk was simply too great. Thank you – I owe you one.

We also found the time to feed the local wildlife with our awful pack lunches and they seemed very grateful, however neither the horses nor donkeys seemed keen on our frozen sausage rolls!

Isle of Wight Furniture Rescue – by Lt GN Banting

On Monday 17 February 2014 30 individuals from 202 Signal Squadron were requested to assist with an evacuation operation which was taking place on Undercliff Drive, Isle of Wight. Not yet really sure of what our task entailed, we headed straight out that evening from Southampton and arrived in East Cowes, Isle of Wight at 2030.

Capt Leigh who was already based on the Isle of Wight briefed us on the situation. Nine houses had been affected by a substantial landslide on Undercliff Drive, St. Lawrence. The land was slipping in a horse shoe shape and was worse at both ends of the group of properties, cutting them off from road access. The ground was moving very quickly, about 1.5 meters per day, and the experts were unsure when it would slow down or stop. The worst hit property had already been condemned and there were two others on the same side of the road which had damage starting to show. Houses on the opposite side of the road to the coastline were not yet affected, but due to the uncertainty of what would happen to the whole area the residents were strongly advised to vacate their properties.

Under **WO2 Davies**, who was responsible for the coordination, our job was to get as much of the owners possessions out as we could in the time we were there, so it could all be put into storage in case the worst happened. The owners needed to prioritise their possessions so the more important items were moved first.



The team receiving a SITREP on the extent of the damage at Undercliff Drive

An additional task we were given was under the control of **Sgt Rees, LCpl Wheatland, Sig Andrews and Sig Skews** immediately deployed to provide security to the affected houses through the night as most were empty. The nights were uneventful apart from a few crazy Isle folk getting over excited at the prospect of a bridleway and having conversations with the trees.

The landslide had caused the road either side of the properties to narrow to a width only passable on foot or by very small vehicle. This meant the residents' possessions all had to be loaded onto a trailer which was then transported to the removals van by the coastguard's quad bikes.

We worked hard for 2 days, managing to clear some of the houses completely and got the majority of belongings out of the rest by the time we finished. We left Undercliff Drive on the evening of Wednesday 19 February to head back to Bulford and join the rest of the Squadron who were now working from camp.

For most of us this concluded our work on Op PITCHPOLE.

206 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj David Spencer**
SSM **WO2 Stephen Harrison**

BCIP to SICF Interoperability Trials – by LCpl Milady

Ex ROCHAMBEAU on the horizon has presented some technical challenges. After returning from Christmas leave, five members of 206 Signal Squadron, **LCpl Milady, Sig Barnett, Sig Johnson, Sig Stables and Sig Butler**, were tasked with a multi-national interoperability trial between Bowman and the French system SICF.

The two week trial consisted of numerous tests over the British and French systems. We used TNG (Tactical Network Gateway) and a civilian system named MIP (Multilateral Interoperability Programme) to exchange various formal messaging formats and exchange orbit symbols and locations. We could also access the French Sharepoint site and use instant chat (JCHAT and BCHAT): a massive learning curve for us all!

The second phase of the trial was conducted on French soil, in a small town named Besançon. Unfortunately we were staying in a 4* hotel with an allowance to spend on food daily! The trials were again conducted over a two week period in the heat of central France, where wine was not forbidden at lunchtimes! The American Forces were also deployed on the exercise, challenging us to a press up competition on the hour every hour.

The weekend in between the exercise we all travelled north to the city of Dijon, famous for its mustard. The final week was to confirm that the equipment which we were using was serviceable to deploy on Ex ROCHAMBEAU 2014, where 3 (UK) DSR will be setting up Main HQ and conducting these tests in an exercise scenario for 3 (UK) Div HQ staff. On success of the equipment serviceability, we commenced the thirteen hour epic journey back to Bulford- not forgetting the duty free en route!

CT1 Training – by Lt Eaton

The Regiment has now reorbated and we're all working towards becoming the new Multi-Role Signal Regiment, which means a fresh start with some low-level detachment skills and troop training. Unfortunately, this clashed somewhat with the surprise of Op PITCHPOLE and the BCIP 5.5 equipment uplift – the grand plans of getting back to nature away from it



all with just your det and your crew were revisited once we went to 2 hours notice to move and lost all the BNAUs and Bowman HDDs.

For Mons Troop this didn't affect them much as they are re-rolling to Level 2 ICS support, while uplifting the Regiments Falcon fleet to Falcon 6.1. Instead of getting dirty and tactical, they continued to roll through training on Falcon and Magpie. For Falcon, this meant software and hardware upgrades and reconfiguration for the entire fleet. For Magpie, rebuilding the servers after the IRON Exercises provided some valuable training to the Troop.

The radio troops on the other hand, reworked weeks of planning and came up with low-level training that would still be useful and (hopefully) enjoyable. The biggest hurdle was out of the way – having a training area booked – so the objective was to spend as much time out of the garages as possible and get out on the area!



TAC Briefs in the sunshine

After working on tactical detachment siting and ground/TAC briefs, Cambrai Troop took a big swing at navigation, starting with a vehicle navigation exercise across Salisbury Plain. Initially starting well, with only **Sig Orme** and **Sig Johnson** having to leave their vehicle in order to get their bearings, things soon turned south and a few surprise training objectives were thrown in. **Sig Lewis** managed some interesting route selection and ended up bogged in, with **LCpl Milady** and **Sig Gourlay** stopping to be helpful and laugh at their predicament before realising they had a flat tyre. Digging out an FFR and changing a tyre in the field rounded off the day's training!



Sig Gourley gets stuck in



Impromptu maintenance in the field

The continuation of the navigation training went into a night navigation exercise across Salisbury Plain. Unfortunately there are no photos as although there was fair weather before the event, as soon as the first whistle went, heavy cloud cover, pouring rain and thick fog set in which made it difficult to see wood blocks and roads, let alone anything else. Morale was maintained for the majority of the night despite the harsh conditions, culminating in **Lt Eaton** and **SSgt Hallsworth** deploying across the plain to search for **Cpl Stanley's** group, lost somewhere in Area 17!

With a firm grounding in navigation, the signallers' leadership was fully tested on a round-robin day of leaderless command tasks, with some imaginative and resourceful methods surprising the JNCOs running the stands and the DS watching in amazement!

228 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj B Jeffery**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) N Cansfield**

Collectively 228 Signal Squadron have spent very little time in barracks in the past few months. The two Troops are about to go through a re-structure and name change to meet our commitments for the role of supporting the Lead Armoured Task Force (LATF) headquarters. Forward Troop have once again deployed to Kenya to support battlegroup training, whilst Main Troop have been conducting collective training and preparations for Ex ROCHAMBEAU in France. Later in the year the Squadron will deploy to Kenya (again), Canada (twice) and Salisbury Plain (too many times to mention).

Main Troop Continuation Training Level 1 During the Worst Storms Ever - by LCpl Jemma Barton

On Monday 10 February Main Troop deployed out to the Salisbury Plain training area for CT1 continuation training. The aim of this exercise was to enhance and refresh the soldiers' skills and knowledge.

The day we deployed the weather was in our favour, however as like most exercises the weather rapidly changed to very



wet, very windy and extremely cold. Before we headed out to our individual areas we received a few lessons on voice procedure and navigation to assist the less experienced soldiers. Detachment commanders received their orders and we deployed out on our own.

Most members of Main Troop arrived at their relevant locations in good time, apart from **Cpl Cornfield** and myself. I blame **Cpl Cornfield's** navigational skills!! He tried to blame a flooded field and a mere 2 hours later we made it to our location and set up.

Sig Ingold had the honour of controlling the net as call sign 0 and thoroughly enjoyed telling everyone frequency ranges over the net. Fair enough if you know what you're talking about, but he confused his HF and VHF ranges and even they were slightly wrong!

In the early hours we got our notice to move timings for a rolling replen, something I had never done before and was a lot of fun. Back to the Command Post for a new set of orders and a change of det crews before deploying back out.



Cpl Norman's det tactically hidden in the wood line



Lt Higgins just before endex

That same day the weather continued to turn for the worse and we struggled to set up the detachments due to the wind. **LCpl Brown** and **Sig Mortimer** heard a loud bang during the night and at first they thought it was nothing, however they soon discovered that a huge tree had fallen 10 metres from their detachment.

On Friday 14 February the final Notice to Move timings were issued to our joy as ENDEX was close. In to camp by 0600 hours we started to complete the exercise turnaround. During a hot debrief we highlighted work on points and all agreed that overall it proved to be a rewarding exercise. The bad news was that Op PITCHPOLE had been called and we were all warned off for a short notice deployment!!

Exercise ASKARI STORM Jan 21 – Mar 22 13 - by Sig Auld

We deployed to BATUK to provide a HQ for the 12 Brigade exercise ASKARI STORM 5. On arrival we were initially working in Nairobi where we were greeted by the advance party of **Lt Thomas** and **Cpl Strachan**.

Once all the handover of equipment was done we were left with some time to spare before travelling up north. Over these few days we found some time for acclimatisation beside the swimming pool and it gave us a chance to witness the almost professional standard of diving that **Sig Richards** had to share with us. This was ideal as it gave us some time to heal from the overdose of vitamin D from day 1. Next was a 4 hour road move up north to Lakipia Air Base (LAB), allowing us our first opportunity to glimpse a bit of Africa.

After the long drive we finally we made it to LAB where we spent 3 weeks before the final exercise. Whilst here we carried on our daily PT sessions at 0630 (that everyone loved so much) which were followed by perhaps one of the coldest pressure showers Kenya has to offer. Unfortunately for anyone else on camp not already awake, girly screams from the male shower block added to their morning chorus. The 3 weeks at this location were well spent, **Cpl Strachan** got his Montrose FC wooden carving (apparently “the sleeping giants of Scottish football”), **Sig Firman** spent some time trying to shift 8 kilos of Christmas weight and **Sig Jackson** used his spare time to train for a half marathon back in the UK.

For the final exercise we deployed early morning. For many of us it was the first chance to see the wild side of Kenya, having to stop to let elephants pass and seeing giraffes, zebra and other animals en route. On reaching the HQ location we set up. This involved fitting the HQ with eight data terminals, three VHF radios and one HF radio, along with an array of maps and white boards. On completion **LCpl Nunn** and **Sig Richards** deployed to the hill top site where they would man the rebro. As the exercise started and shift rotations kicked in the week flew.



Goodbye Kenya



Our final few days were spent panic tanning and buying wooden carvings before finally making that 4 hour drive back to Nairobi where we spent a few hours before doing the last bus ride in Kenya to the airport at 0100 for our flight back to the UK.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj A McKenna MBE AAC**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Law**

The Squadron has recently been heavily involved with the Real Life Support preparations for Ex ROCHAMBEAU (A French led CPX being held in the Champagne region of France) and the 70th Normandy Anniversary Commemorations. It was also possible to organise and send a portion of the Squadron on Adventure Training as described in the following articles.

Exercise TIGER SOMME 14 (TS) – by SSgt Kate Hopkinson

This years Support Squadron Adventure Training package saw at least 80 personnel from Sp Sqn deploy to Rothiemercus Lodge, near Aviemore for a fun filled 2 weeks of AT. Run as two packages for 5 days each the first hurdle was the coach journey up to Scotland.

The advance party was ready and waiting for the troops and **CSgt Mo Maloney** wasted no time in warmly greeting the participants and ushering them into their accommodation. After a brief and evening meal superbly produced last minute (plan B was the takeaway pizza place in town) by **Pte Mason** the troops had a quiet night in front of the real fire and got themselves ready for the first day.

At this point I would like to thank all the instructors and feel a mention by name is the only way to do this, big thanks go to: **SSgt Daz Clough**, **CSgt Mo Maloney**, **Sgt Dan Egan**, **Sgt Andy Stewart**, **Cpl Ginge Newton** and **Pte Gronwalt**. I would also like to say a big thank you to **Cpl John Latto** for doing all the admin tasks that come with a trip like this, **Pte Mason** and **LCpl Gurung** for supplying the excellent meals. Also for **Sgt Kev Potts** for persuading the OC to let him stay for an extra week to help out with Admin!!

The 3 days of activities went smoothly with only minor injuries on the Mountain Biking sustained from participant's re-enacting scenes from BMX Bandits. A quick mention to **Sig James** from the MT who got a little queasy on the mini bus going out to the Mountain Biking, a big well done for making it to the end.

The cultural day to Fort George went well. After a slight navigation error by the Tom-Tom we all made it to the Fort and had an interesting presentation by 2 SCOTS followed by a walk around the Fort. An afternoon shopping trip to Inverness followed with all troops successfully rounded up and shipped back to the Lodge for the evening meal.

After a weekend of turning the lodge around which involved the watching of some rugby (won't talk about the score to the token Welshman **CSgt Mo Maloney**) the admin party was ready for the second group.

The same admin took place and the troops carried out the same activities. **Cpl Rai** is worthy of a mention after attempting the Black Route on the Mountain Biking and splitting his crash helmet nearly in half...hey its what we wear them for. **Cpl 'Kezza' Gilding** did well on the abseil and everyone enjoyed the activities. **Sig Pettitt** and **Sgt Rach Tovagone** managed a day skiing up in the Cairngorms with some of the best weather you could wish for.



SSgt Hopkinson pointing the direction to RHQ

The second week went just as well and the end of the exercise saw all troops recovered back to Bulford safely.

The Exercise was a great success and I would like to thank everyone for their help, and wish Sp Sqn the best of luck in their next AT trip.



It doesn't get any better in the Cairngorms

Exercise MERCURY SNOWRIDER 5 (MSR)

– by WO2 (SSM) LAW

Once again the time had come to take part in the Corps Snowboarding championships, and the team had been looking forward to this for quite some time. The 2 weeks started in the normal way with the long drive to Austria, but once we arrived the journey was forgotten and everyone was looking forward to getting on the mountain.

Sunday was a day of admin and teaching the novices within the team the basics of snowboarding, assisting them in getting off the nursery slope a bit quicker during the week. With the help of the competent riders and BASI snowboarder **WO2 Ed Law**, all the novices were up and linking their turns within a few hours, which was an extremely encouraging start for the week.





The 3(UK) Div HQ & Sig Regt Team

The first week was all about the training of the novices and improvement of the intermediate and advanced riders. The whole team is broken down and this year split across 15 different ability groups, enabling everyone to mix with many other units. As always this week is always the most tiring, as the camp are always on the first gondolas up and are always the last to the bottom of the mountain with only a short break for lunch, but if there were more hours in the day we would continue boarding. The middle of the first week a local Snowboarding shop had its traditional half price equipment sale on and many of the team used this opportunity to purchase new equipment, and the next morning everyone can see who's splashed out as all the new kit is being used.

At the end of the first week, which seems to come round far too quick, we say goodbye to the Ripstar instructors by way of a fancy dress party which is always a good night, with some very interesting outfits but mainly an excuse for some guys to put women's clothes on!!!

The 2nd week started on the Sunday and the camp has transitioned into race week, with the intermediate and advanced seeding already completed it was time for the novices to seed for the slalom. All of the team qualified for the next round except for Lt 'Capt Slow' Hutchings, who thought slow and steady would win the race. It's not like officers to be wrong!!! There was a change in the program for

the 2nd day of race week due to the warm weather and lack of snow at lower levels, the Slope Style had to be brought forward. It was a day of pure sunshine, sometimes good music, and some great tricks in the park. Two Members of the team finished in the top 10, **WO2 Ed Law** (9th) and **Sig Anthony Smith** (10th).

Tuesday came and it was the knockout of the slalom, this wasn't the best event for 3 DSR with most of the team getting knocked out in the first round, through a number of silly errors by different members of the team. Not to worry though, boarder cross was coming soon and anything can happen in that. Wednesday was the boarder cross seeding races and this year it was a whole new course which turned out to be a bit cheeky in places, but really good fun to ride. Again all members of the team qualified less one, this time **LCpl 'Razz' Brown** took the Capt Slow title.

The day of the boarder cross came and before racing even started 2 of the team managed to injure themselves, **Cpl 'Percy' Thrower** fell onto his shoulder damaging his ligaments and **LCpl 'The other Mario' Middlecoate** fell and cracked his helmet and was taken to hospital with concussion. When the racing did get started it was enjoyed by everyone and who won or lost didn't really matter as everyone just wanted to keep racing. **Sig Ross Anthony** managed to finish 2nd which was a massive achievement for him, being this was only his 2nd year.

Sadly the last day arrived, and the night of the prize giving was upon us. Not wanting to be expectant of winning much we settled in for plenty of clapping for the other teams. But to our surprise we walked away with overall team Runner up, with **WO2 Law**, **LCpl Hughes**, **Sig Smith** and **Sig Anthony** being selected for the Corps Squad. Individual prizes were 2nd place in boarder cross for **Sig Anthony** and overall 3rd place Novice rider for **Sig 'this is better than skiing' Skelding**. The night was over, we headed out for a few well deserved drinks and took our prizes back to the accommodation for a good sleep before the long journey home. A very successful camp was had by the 3 DSR team and many already looking forward to the next one. 3 DSR Snowboarding team would like to thank the Committee for their tireless work to make the camp a success it was, and all the avenues of funding that enabled the team to take part.

Until next year!



14th SIGNAL REGIMENT (ELECTRONIC WARFARE) HAVERFORDWEST



CO **Lt Col Mark Purves**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Gaz Rhoades**

223 SIGNAL SQUADRON (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

OC **Maj Miles Nettleship**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Dave Corcoran**

Exercise ALFRED'S TALON – by LCpl McCabe

Ex ALFRED'S TALON was a 223 Signal Squadron (EW) exercise. As a Squadron our main objective is to provide support to the Lead Armour Battle Group in 12 Mech Bde.

This exercise was split into 2 phases. The first part took place at Carwent, Wales and the focus was to take us a step further in our contact drills. Every man in the Army should have a

basic idea of what to do in a contact situation, such as the withdrawal, break man for your left or right peels and if the opportunity arises to take the enemy on and win the fight. The next step was directed more towards the withdrawal and after the break man had been called. This is known as clearance drills, which incorporate clearing the route located in cover, and paying attention to the windows, doors, holes in the walls; basically everything that a rifle could pop out from. We thoroughly rehearsed clearing our part and then directing oncoming troops to their area of interest. I thought this was mega! Even though Jimmy sits firmly on my cap badge, I have always been excited about the greener side of the Army and get stuck in. Even though I wasn't a 2IC or Section Commander I learnt a great deal which in turn helps me out for when I take up the role. I find it easier to pick the best parts or tricks I would use and then try to tailor these when the time arises.



Up next were vehicle contact drills. This is epic and makes a change from the ground drills, even though towards the end of the simulated contact that is what you end up doing anyway! The DS had set up a round robin where each call sign deployed in a GS Landrover and an FFR and had to adhere to the planned route. There were a total of six stands which were completely random, so you didn't know what to expect. Each serial ranged from checkpoints, to CPERS, to contact lefts and right and even changing a wheel under fire... Epic!! The more we practiced the smoother it looked. Jumping out of the vehicle to return fire became second nature for the lads involved. Smoke grenades and practice grenades, all going off around you made it even more enjoyable. I'm not talking about the odd one, boom and job done, I'm talking about 3-4 going off at the same time, everybody on an adrenaline rush and just giving it max effort. I have never been on Operations so the lads who have done it in real time would argue that it's totally different, but for what it was it was class.



Onto phase 2 of the exercise: communications. Good old Sennybridge was the location in question with its very own micro climate: snow, rain, sunshine and wind all in one day! The weather was unpredictable and at the end it felt like I had jumped in a bath with my clothes on. The purpose of this phase was about cam and concealment and being able to operate in a detachment for excessive periods of time. The detachment was made up of Electronic Warfare System Operators, Communication System Operators and an Operator of Military Intelligence from the Intelligence Corps.

We were given a lot more rope to do our own thing, so even though we were given a grid, we didn't have to set up exactly there and had another 500m to play with. The first night we used an old quarry and even the DS found it extremely difficult to find us. When we were in and working it was time for trial and error. The OC Squadron, **Maj Nettleship**, was looking for the pros and cons of how we work on a detachment: is the kit/equipment suitable? Is there anything we don't have that would work better and be more reliable? When we are working, are there any methods that work better than others? And so on and so forth.

A lot of good points were raised and changes made for future exercises... stay tuned for Ex DRAGON'S TALON. It was a good exercise, minus the weather. It gave the more experienced operators a chance to pass their knowledge onto the newer generation and in turn give them a chance to actually get hands on with the kit, some for the very first time.

I am still fairly new myself to the whole life on a detachment and personally it was great for me to see how it works and to enhance my skill set, so in the future I can develop the new lads and become a reliable and beneficial asset to whatever detachment I'm assigned to.

226 SIGNAL SQUADRON (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

OC **Maj Isy Bangurah**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Barrington Harvey**

Exercise **EAGLE'S EYE** – by *LCpl Hames INT CORPS*

In February this year, members of Airborne Assault Task Force (AATF) from 226 Signal Squadron (Electronic Warfare), Light EW Team (LEWT) deployed on Exercise EAGLE'S EYE, alongside 16 Air Assault Brigade and 2e Regiment Etranger de Parachutistes (2e REP) on the rugged Mediterranean Island of Corsica. Unfortunately it was not all sunshine and beaches as we had hoped for.

Ex EAGLE'S EYE was designed to fully challenge members of 16 Air Assault Brigade and build on its relationship with the French 11e Brigade Parachutiste, which is also held at high readiness to deploy on contingency operations ranging from war fighting to disaster relief.

The first week was very busy and consisted of mountain and amphibious training where LEWT members were taught survival techniques and even had the opportunity to earn French parachute wings by jumping with Legionnaires from a French C-160 aircraft.



l – r: LCpl Lloyd, LCpl Sommers, LCpl Hames, Cpl Jones, LCpl Bancroft, Cpl Tyler

The second week saw the LEWT deploy with other members of 16 Air Assault Brigade to the not so sunny mountains of Corsica. All LEWTs operated from covert observation posts and used their skills to provide valuable indicators and



warnings to ground troops. The week was extremely challenging and rewarding for all involved and helped to develop understanding and working relationships between British and French soldiers.

640 Troop, 226 Sig Sqn (EW) – by LCpl Davis

Since getting back from Op HERRICK 18 it has been a busy time for 640 Troop, 226 Sig Sqn (EW). The main effort was re-organising into our new role as contingency support, which was tested on the annual Regimental exercise DRAGON'S TALON. 640 Troop had recently been trained to use its new EW platform, and worked hard to get it out of the door on Ex DRAGON'S TALON for the first time. At the wonderful time of 0200 on Mon 3 Mar 14, the operators and detachment commanders left Cawdor Barracks for Penally Camp which would be our new home for the next two weeks. After a fortnight of tinkering, experimentation and playing Uno, we had two solid days of visits by senior officers and MOD Civilians to finish it all off.

640 Troop also contributed a fair selection of guys and girls to the Royal Signals hockey championship in Aldershot garrison at the beginning of April. Despite only having two players that had ever touched a hockey stick before the competition, the team did surprisingly well, mainly due to their secret weapon, **LCpl Tough**, and came second overall which was a great result. For those who hadn't played before it was a steep learning curve but an enjoyable experience.

237 SIGNAL SQUADRON (ELECTRONIC WARFARE)

OC **Maj Jane Ellis**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Bruce Morrison**

Exercise DRAGON'S PISTE – by LCpl Brown

In March members of 14 Signal Regiment (Electronic Warfare) embarked to Val Thorens, France on Ex DRAGON'S PISTE. The exercise was a skiing expedition open to all ranges of experience offering the qualifications of Ski Foundation 1 and 2.

The group left Cawdor Barracks under the command of **Capt Cave** (2IC 226 Sig Sqn) on 14 March with a 20 hour coach journey ahead of us. We finally arrived in Val Thorens on the Saturday around midday, which left us with some time to explore and squeeze into the accommodation.

We hit the snow first thing Sunday morning with lift passes waiting to be used; for the SF1 groups, however, the passes would remain unused for the first few days while we got to grips with the basics. Although a steep learning curve for most of us, by the third day our instructor felt we were ready for our first green run. Fortunately, my SF1 group picked up skiing quite quickly, and so over the week we gradually progressed from the gentle green runs through blues and onto reds. We were even ambitious enough to try a few black runs, but by the number of bodies piling in it became apparent that we were slightly out of our depth, especially **LCpl Morrison** whose preferred method of 'route one' skiing proved ineffective on the more technical runs.

For my group, the expedition was concluded and highlighted with a run from the peak of Cime de Caron at 3200m. 360° views provided good photo opportunities and the 5.5 km run into the resort was the best skiing we had experienced that week. Ex DRAGON'S PISTE was a great success with all participants coming away with new qualifications, fond memories and personal development. The exercise has also left everyone involved looking forward to 2015's regimental skiing expedition...



Lt Tom MacDonald adopting the usual pose

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Capt Billy Morris**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Shane Murphy**

Spean Bridge Commando Speed March - by Capt Nigel Clay

In 2008, the Corps Foreman of Signals, **WO1 (CFofS) Lang**, was the Ops Foreman at 216 (Parachute) Signal Squadron and he told me about an event which takes place each year to commemorate the establishment of the Commando Training Establishment at Achnacarry House, Spean Bridge. Volunteers for the new Commando Unit arrived at Spean Bridge railway station and troops were force marched to the house carrying 36lbs of equipment in one hour. Anyone failing to stay with the squad was RTUd on the next train. This event was resurrected in 1996 in order to raise money for charitable bodies including the Commando Benevolent Fund and Airborne Forces charities.

A team of six from the Regt embarked on an epic trip to the Highlands and the first task was to drive the route of the speed march. We had map recced the route but we were still surprised by the climb at the start of the run which leads to the Commando memorial. The good news is that after the challenging mile or so uphill, there are only 5 miles to go! It is hard to imagine soldiers doing this 'back in the day' because it is still extremely demanding in modern technical gear. Four members of the team completed the march in under the hour and the winner from the Regt was **LCpl Sam Cowen** in a very respectable 54 minutes. The standard was extremely high as the field included many airborne units and commando units, but the Regt finished 11th out of 27. The Regt were the highest placed team in the Corps and so 14 Sig Regt (EW) are officially the Corps Commando Speed March Champions 2014!



*The 2014 Corps Commando Speed March Champions!
L – R: Capt Nigel Clay, YofS(EW) Allan, Lt Chris Collier, LCpl Cowen, LCpl Davies and WO2 (QMSI) Sam Lingwood*



Look at Life - by Capt Tom Robinson



On 17 Feb the Regiment opened its doors to the youth of Pembrokeshire in a drive to increase awareness of the employment opportunities within the Armed Forces. The Regimental 'look at life' as it was dubbed aimed to introduce local youths of school leaver age to the prospects of a career in the Armed Forces, specifically the Army (despite being an airfield, 'RAF Brawdy' has no planes of which to speak and its maritime affiliation extends to a discount on surf hire at Newgale beach...). The youths were given the run of camp, albeit within rigid timings, under constant supervision and to a specific programme, in order to experience the realities of daily routine within a working regiment.



As with all good military events it started with a beating. Luckily for the youths, this was the PTIs getting beasted in order to demonstrate entry level phys requirements and typical military PT. Despite initial reluctance, the group eventually threw themselves (literally in the case of the under and over bars on the trim trail) into the session. By the end of the 90 minutes they were working as a team moving barrels of essential medical supplies over a 3 mile deep chasm in order to rescue a downed pilot in the middle east - though to the untrained eye this may have appeared more like several groups of teenagers moving blue plastic containers from one bit of grass to another bit of grass separated by two planks of wood - and fighting for survival in the ring of steel. Imagine the training montage in Rocky, slow it down to quarter speed, remove half of the activities he did and include more rest for an idea of the tempo.



After such an arduous session they were refuelled in the HUB where they took on a blend of protein, fats and complex carbohydrates as well as topping up their fluids. This was provided to them at no expense (thanks to the RCWO and JSP 456 DCM Volume 2, Chapter 5, para 0509) and came in the food form known as pizza, chips and screech. Not wanting to waste the opportunity they sat on mixed tables with an assortment of soldiers from the cap badges and services housed at Cawdor Barracks. This gave them the opportunity to have an informal chat in a relaxed environment with soldiers who would have been at their stage a few years ago.



Avoiding the post lunch PowerPoint and inevitable drooping eyelids we took them for a walk around camp, dipping into working areas on our rounds and receiving excellent briefs from the various departments. I was immensely proud of the efforts the mostly junior soldiers had gone to in preparing their briefs and decorating their stands in order to showcase their trade and capbadge. They gave a realistic portrayal of what a working day involved and highlighted the opportunities that their particular branch of the Army offered to a potential recruit. Despite the best efforts and incredible imagination of some of the displays the LAD garnered the most interest. Apparently explaining the manipulation and exploitation of the electromagnetic spectrum to increase situational awareness and reduce the enemy's ability to communicate isn't quite as 'cool' to a group of 16 to 18 year olds as picking up a Land Rover with a recovery vehicle and swinging it around the workshop... (obviously I am making full use of my artistic licence in this article and the aforementioned event probably didn't happen. What is more likely to have happened was they picked up the Land Rover by about a foot then gently returned it to the ground, but stories like that don't sell copies of *The Wire* in their dozens!)



Regardless of the REME's needless showboating, every soldier involved provided an interesting and articulate presentation on their field and did the Regiment and their respective Corps proud. Having peaked the groups interest/exertion levels with a few vehicles and spelling their names in Arabic, the Q&A session was more subdued than expected. Endex was called and thank you emails to chains of command dispatched for releasing their manpower to help in what was a successful venture, both from a recruiting and a community engagement perspective.

Events like this are a vital part of that community engagement and are opportunities that should be encouraged, especially





within Regiments where the resources to put on such an opportunity are readily available. We didn't need to hire in any specialist equipment or have Army recruiting present, just the right calibre of soldiers pitching a targeted presentation with a bit of activity and kit in the background. The reward for an afternoon's work was better

relations with the local community and its council and an opportunity for soldiers to build some profile. Every one of

the ranks involved had to demonstrate organisation, imagination, planning and preparation, coordination of assets and had to deliver a suitably pitched brief to an external audience with a specific goal, drawing on training and personal experiences to make it dynamic and interesting. Now to tap up the local council for some favours as I believe they owe me one...





15th SIGNAL REGIMENT (INFORMATION SUPPORT) BLANDFORD



CO **Maj Tony Barry**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Mark Collins**
Adjt **Capt Andy McGrane**

Promotions

The regiment would like to congratulate 4 members of the Regiment, **Sgt Wright**, **Sgt Perry**, **Sgt Greenwood** and **Sgt Williams**, having been successfully selected for promotion to SSgt.

Visit of Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal

The morning of 16 April had arrived much quicker than the planning team had realised, although not soon enough from the wider Regiment's perspective who'd had their fill of rehearsals and preparations. 15 Signal Regiment (Information Support) had been given the privilege of hosting our Colonel in Chief Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, and months of planning were finally coming to fruition.

Her Royal Highness arrived by helicopter and was met by the Master of Signals **Maj Gen Nick Pope CBE** who in turn presented the reception party comprising of the Commanding Officer, Regimental Sergeant Major and Adjutant in addition to Corps HQ personnel. Introductions complete, the Commanding Officer invited Her Royal Highness to walk to Babbage Building to receive a Regimental presentation before progressing onto Sub Unit stands.



The walk to Babbage Building

The first stand presented was our National Reserve Element, the Land Information Communication Services Group (LICSG), using their specialist title for the last time before renaming to 254 (Specialist Group Information Services) Signal Squadron. Both **Lt Col Keith Bell** and **Capt Wendi Lee-Barry** spoke with Her Royal Highness, explaining the role of the Squadron and indeed how their industry experience is being brought to bear within the Regiment.



The Master welcomes HRH



HRH talking with members of LICSG



Next followed 262 (Logistic Services Support) Signal Squadron. Headed up by **Flt Lt Mike Summers**, he presented members of the Squadron who in turn explained the role of the Squadron and the challenges they have encountered thus far.



HRH talking with members of 262 (LSS) Sig Sqn

259 (Global Information Services) Signal Squadron were next, allowing OC, **Maj Trev Wood RA**, to introduce his Squadron Headquarters and Troop Commanders **Capt Adi Watts** and **Capt Pete Asplen**, who in turn presented members of their Troops.



HRH sharing a joke with SSgt (Yofs) Rotherham-Bone

The penultimate stand was provided by 233 (Global Communication Networks) Signal Squadron, which provided explanations of Network Operations, Network Support and the Inspection Teams. **LCpl Walker** was presented to Her Royal Highness before demonstrating how a telephone call



HRH meeting member of the 233 (GCN) Signal Squadron

could be routed from Falcon to any smartphone, catching the Corps Colonel off guard with a surprising one to one conversation with the Princess Royal.



HRH makes a surprise call to the Corps Colonel

The final stand during this phase of the visit was provided by Support Squadron, headed up by the Quartermaster, **Maj Prem Ale**. Personalities from the Quartermaster's department, MT and the Training Wing explained their role in sustaining Regimental activity, specifically support to Mission Specific Training.



HRH meets more members of the Regiment

With the Sub Unit stands complete, the visit relocated to the Officers' Mess where Her Royal Highness was invited to be photographed with the Regiment. Thankfully the hard work and rehearsal time paid dividends, allow the photograph to be captured with minimal effort.



HRH meeting wives and partners



Following a short break for lunch, Her Royal Highness was invited to meet more members of the Regiment including partners who had taken the time to travel considerable distance to take part. This was followed immediately by the presentation of a Long Service and Good Conduct Medal to **Sgt Barry Lawes**, flowers to **Mrs Elizabeth Lawes** and a Master of Signals Award to **Sgt Kirsty Wint**.



HRH chatting with Sergeant Lawes



The Master of Signals presenting flowers to Mrs Elizabeth Lawes



HRH chatting with Sergeant Kirsty Wint

Finally the visit concluded with the signing of the Regimental Album and the presentation of a large Posy to Her Royal Highness by the daughter of **Sgt Lawes**, **Poppy**.

The visit was a great success mainly due to the efforts of the Regiment to enable the headquarters plan. The Regiment had marked its third birthday in style, cementing its place in

the Corps new ORBAT. It was therefore only fitting that the day conclude with a Regimental dinner held in the Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess. The Regiment invited Commander 2 Signal Group, **Col Simon Hutchinson**, as the Guest of Honour along with the previous CO, **Lt Col (Retd) Paul Pearce**, for a final farewell. As always the dinner was excellent and following the presentation of Top Squadron to 233 (Global Communication Networks) Signal Squadron and Corps Colours to **Cpl Darryl Jukes**, the former CO was invited to say a few words. Fighting his emotions as always, he delivered a modest and thankful speech that concluded in the most original style befitting his new civilian role of innovation; the Regimental dinner night selfie - a first!



The first Dinner Night Selfie



HRH receiving a brief from Capt Adi Watts



HRH sharing a joke regarding the Corps love of the RSIT



Exercise MAU SHOOTER

Ex MAU SHOOTER is 15 Signal Regiment's annual shooting competition, conducted by the Regimental Training Wing. As the final part of the intra-Squadron competition, tensions ran high amongst some of the Sqns vying for top spot.

The shoot had a serious side, in encouraging better marksmanship principles within the Regiment.

259 Sig Sqn managed to secure top place, with 233 Sig Sqn narrowly missing the top spot. 262 secured 'top individual best'.

A fun quiz provided light relief whilst teams waited their spot on the firing point.

Royal Signals Hockey Championships

15 Signal Regiment (Information Support) attended with a diverse team not only in range of cap badges but also ability, ranging from Masters Team member (**WO1 'Billy the Whizz' Collins**) to never played before (**LCpl 'Target Practice' Watkins** RW).

The team played valiantly during the outdoor composition attaining fourth position. This ignited the fire for success during the indoor competition where the team gained a commendable second place.



15 Sig Regt (IS) Hockey Team

Exercise MAU VANGUARD 3/13

Ex MAU VANGUARD is 15 Signal Regiment's PDT exercise preparing our Level 3 Engineers for deployment to Op HERRICK and readiness for AATF and other contingency tasks.

It encompasses two distinct phases, dry and live (or in this case dry and wet). During the weekend dry training, the Level



SSgt 'The Hoff' Fox rescues WO2 (SSM) 'Ariel' Dolan from the icy depths

3 Engineers were given an afternoon of lessons in subjects such as training safety, first aid and theoretical tactics. That evening it was time to put all of training in to practice as the Level 3 Engineers deployed to Pant Mawr, a 'stone tent' with no windows or doors but a roof over your head.

After proving their skills in the dry phase, it was time to move on to live.

A brief ACMT proved that all of our Level 3 Engineers were proficient with their rifle, before training progressed on to the field firing exercises. By the end of the week-long package all of the Level 3 Engineers were confident they had been tested to the required standards.

233 (GLOBAL COMMUNICATION NETWORKS) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	Maj (TOT) Martin Flather
2IC	Capt Tom Howley
SSM	WO2 (SSM) Jules Dolan
OC Net Ops Tp	Capt (TOT) Bob Pace
OC Net Sp Tp	Capt (TOT) Paddy Ferguson
RSIT FofS	WO1 (FofS) Carl Gaber

The Squadron continues with providing Level 3 technical support to a diverse audience; primarily Op HERRICK with Promina, Kestrel and Avaya, but also continued Cormorant support to Op KIPION, Falcon support to the AATF, ARRC and MRSRs, as well as leading the Systems of Systems integration and interoperability work under the Falcon Integration Task Force banner.

RSIT are in the process of changing their colours from inspection to assurance, and are not missing any opportunities to expand their support footprint, to include BATUK, BATUS, Cyprus and the Falkland Islands

Amongst all of this we continue to press ahead with the build of a new Network Equipment Room to house the Falcon hub and the UK Configurable Mission Secret and Operational Training Emulation System data centres. Never a dull moment in 233!

The Sqn welcomes **Sgt Adams**, **Cpl Davies**, **Cpl Toduadua** and **LCpl Terrett** and bids farewell and good luck to **WO1 (FofS) Marcus Clarke**, **SSgt Danny Adams** who leave us on completion of their full Colour Service, **Sgt 'Spud' Williams** who somehow has managed to get posted to Diego Garcia, **LCpl Del Hunter** and **LCpl Oli Bulman** who leave us for Civ Div and finally our best wishes are with **WO2 (FofS) Lesley Read** who has deployed on Op HERRICK as the SO3 SST LO.

Life in the Hub – by LCpl Adams

Net Ops Tp is the beating heart of 233 Sig Sqn and in the very middle sits the Corsham hub. This epicentre of technical genius both manages and maintains vital operational systems and networks such as Promina, Kestrel, Cormorant, Avaya and their associated encryption systems and it is not unknown to answer support questions for a communications system never before heard of!

There are four shifts working in parallel with one another so the hub is manned 24/7, 365 days a year – the shifts consist of five personnel. The shift IC, usually a Sgt, can mostly be found in the swimming pool, on the hockey pitch or skiing like **Sgts Barnard**, **Cattermole**, **Aitchison** and **Shepherd**. The 2IC is usually a Cpl (except for the mighty **LCpl Mike Hedworth**) and the organiser of the shift. The real 'go to guys' however are the three LCpls that make up the rest of the shift, particular superstars include **LCpls Tom Allen**, **Dan Harry** and **Ads Stewart**. The shift job is not trade specific and there is a good



mix of both CS Engineers and Operators. The hub is also supplemented by two token RAF SACs on a 6 month tour from 90 SU. The shift cycle we work consists of four dreaded fourteen hour night shifts, four days off, four ten hour day shifts, two standby days and then two off. The hub itself contains a myriad of monitors and other equipment and is constantly a hive of activity... I see it as my own personal bat cave really!



The Bat Cave

The system that is provided the most man hours is Promina. We are Level 2 support for Op HERRICK and do our best to provide fault assistance when required to the engineers in Theatre and also carry out change management and other associated network management tasks from here in Corsham. A typical night shift starts at 1700hrs and finishes at 0700hrs the next morning; although long and tiring there's no chance of sleep as we normally have jobs that can only be done during 'quiet' hours in Theatre. Day shifts start at 0700hrs and finish at 1700hrs and consist of ongoing fault resolution, special jobs from **SSgt (FoS) Brewington**, PT and most important of all... the 'Tasty Bites' run. One of the jobs we carry out and a little known fact outside of the hub is that we enforce Op MINIMISE in Theatre. We have a red phone that is dedicated to the Watchkeeper who will contact us when MINIMISE needs to be enforced.

The hub shift are ably assisted by the Level 3 support provided by the Net Sp Tp duty engineer, usually so committed to the cause that they give up their own weekends to be with us without having been officially called out...**Sgt 'Spud' Williams**.

I am coming to the end of my second year on shift now and despite the tiredness from the awkward sleeping pattern (violins at the ready please) I actually thoroughly enjoy my job in the hub. I am constantly provided with technical challenges, the opportunity to learn from more experienced personnel and also impart my knowledge on those newer to the systems than me and then this is all backed up with a varied PT/sports program the opportunity for AT and a healthy social life.

RSIT in BATUK... again!!!! - by Sgt Taylor

Following two previous visits to the British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK) under the guise of the Information Support Assurance Team (ISAT), 15 Sig Regt was tasked once again to Kenya, although this time as a Bowman Audit Team in order to audit the Bowman 'B' Fleet. The task is part of Programme Oscar, to put BATUK on an enduring footing. Our part is the regain of the whole Bowman Fleet, assessing each platform either green; no problems, Yellow; issues can be rectified in Theatre, Amber; issues require equipment from UK and Red;

beyond rectification within Theatre return to UK. Personally having been part of the two previous inspections and had to, quite literally, rebuild the communication installations across the fleet, I did not hold out much hope that the result of the audit would not be predominately classed Red. The task, audit 40 Land Rover FFRs. A team of 6 was duly dispatched, the core of which was to be RSIT. Unfortunately 32 Sig Regt was being inspected at the same time, so **WO2 Fofs Faz 'what's Bowman?' Farrington** stepped temporarily into the rather vast shoes of the RSIT Fofs, **WO1 Fofs Carl 'yes I really do have Corps running shoes' Gaber** while he inspected 32 Sig Regt. Myself and **Sgt Chris 'I really don't snore that much' Burr**, the RSIT inspectors. The remaining team members, from 15 Sig Regt 259 Sig Sqn **Sgt Benny 'Golden Blanket' Bennett** (RA) and **Cpl Adi Mills** (Yorks), and **BATCIS ISF LO, SSgt Atf Steve Atherton** (REME) (Any random Bowman queries please forward to him)

Having travelled overnight cattle class Kenya Airways, the Pride of Africa, (somewhat different from British Airways Business Class returning in January 13!) the team set straight to work with **FoS Farrington** quickly discovering that only 30 of the 40 vehicles were actually in Nairobi! The vehicles were in Nanyuki (or on the training area).

Auditing a Bowman platform at first glance would seem straight forward, however this is not the case! Question 1; what list do you audit the platform against? The Bowman BOM (Billing of material) from the initial sell off from GD UK? This however contains some items that have been superseded and does not contain and dismount equipment or any of the man pack equipment, they are on another Unit Stores BOM given to the original unit. So the (relatively) new Bowman Equipment Schedule? This does not contain the Adaptor Kit Electronic Equipment (AKEE) (the metal frames and mounts for those frames) or the Installation Kit Electronic Equipment (IKEE). So the Installation Schematic Diagram? This does not specify the lengths of the cables or any of the specific Harris cable details or again the AKEE or IKEE. So a combination of all three!



Complex Bowman Installation

Once you have decided what is supposed to be there, the identification of all the items is the next challenge from the non-descript descriptions. e.g 'Pluggger BRKT sheet master' is the mount for the Vehicle Applique GPS Receiver. An example of many issues that were discovered during the initial days of the Audit.

While in Nairobi the REME led the Signals astray. **SSgt Atherton** convinced us to go to the Safari Hotel, a really nice hotel with a pool restaurant that serves every type of meat and a casino. Where we actually ended up was in a bar for



the locals called the Comfy Inn with an area called the Choma Zone, with hung and skinned animals (dogs possibly!).

Having completed the audit in Nairobi the team moved north to Nanykui to sweep up the remaining vehicles. The team left Nairobi on a bus, with three stowaways, (CSgts from the incoming 3 Para Battlegroup trying to escape the carnage that was about to become Kifaru Camp) for an uncomfortable journey north courtesy of the Kenyan roads. Once at NSG we actually discovered a Green installation being used and looked after by **Sgt Steve Laurence** (R Signals). The remaining installations were not in as good a condition! The final totals stand at Green 2, Yellow 2, Amber 0, Red 36, Safari's 2, Carvings many... and Lion cub urinated Artificer 1.

Exercise MERCURY SNOW RIDER – by SSgt (FofS) Brewington

An unlikely partnership was struck up between ISS, 15 Sig Regt (IS) and 11 Sig Regt, in that each of these units had only one representative for Ex MERCURY SNOW RIDER (V), and so decided to join forces. After a rather exciting (read boring) drive to our stopover accommodation in Elmpt it was time to taste the delights of Bruggen and partake in some liquid refreshments. It was here that **Sgt Jason ‘Lee-Roy Jenkins’ Smith** was introduced to a game called ‘credit card roulette’. As soon as **Sgt Smith** pulled out his bright pink credit card, the waiter was uncontrollably drawn to it, which could mean only one thing, a free meal for **WO2 (FofS) Pete ‘Barnacle Bill’ Fraser** and **SSgt (FofS) Si ‘Shaun White’ Brewington**.

Once we finally arrived in Rauris it was time for the opening brief by the committee, which was concise and relaxed, a good sign for what lay ahead. The first week focused on training, provided by the Dutch ‘RipStar’ team, which was absolutely top notch. This was in preparation for the series of competitions which were planned for the second week. Due to the fact that there was an impressive 150+ people on the camp, organisation and administration had to be strictly controlled, and full credit to the committee for making the qualifying phase so smooth.

First up was the Slalom event, which consisted of a separate race for the novices, after which the intermediates and advanced riders battled it out. Some quite impressive riding allowed **WO2 (FofS) Fraser** to qualify as 4th seed for the race. Slope Style (Freestyle) was next and as expected, there were some ‘sick’ runs down the course by individuals who actually knew how to look cool while spinning, seemingly out of control, through the air.

Last but definitely not least was the Boardercross, in which 4 snowboarders start simultaneously at the top of a winding, inclined course and race to reach the finish line first. This event is as much fun to watch as it is to take part in. Luckily there were no serious injuries sustained during this stage (most of the injuries happen during the first week!).



The Dream Team

All that was left was medals and biscuits, which were distributed on the last night, to all of the esteemed winners. As it turned out, no one from this dream team won anything, or even progressed passed the first round. Perhaps more time should have been spent discussing tactics and not playing ‘shock’ in the bar.

259 (GLOBAL INFORMATION SERVICES) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	Maj T Woods RA
SSM	WO2 S Bowles RE
2IC	Capt Luke Campbell
OC IS Tp	Capt Pete Asplen
OC TS Tp	Capt Adi Watts
OC IS Tp (G)	Mr Martin Shenton

259 (GIS) Sig Sqn would like to say farewell to **WO1 (RSMI) Craig Cable RA** who has retired from the Royal Regiment to pursue his own business. The Sqn would also like to welcome **WO1 (RSMI) Mark Jeffery RA**, his replacement who has taken on the role of Sqn Ops Offr. In addition, the Sqn welcome **Capt Luke Campbell** who has arrived from ATR Pirbright to take over the challenging role of Sqn 2IC.

262 (LOGISTICS SYSTEM SUPPORT) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC	Flt Lt Jason Foster RAF
2IC	Flt Lt Mike Summers RAF
SSM	WO1 Chez Chester RLC

262 (LSS) Sig Sqn would like to welcome back **SAC Pilbro** who has returned from Op HERRICK where he has been supporting the LOG IS component within JFCIS Headquarters. Additionally, the Sqn wishes **Flt Lt Jason Foster** good luck for his immanent deployment as the JFCIS SO3 SST. Thankfully the navigation to Brize Norton and Camp Bastion has been taken care of, so **Flt Lt Foster** should arrive in good order.



16th SIGNAL REGIMENT

ELMPT



CO **Lt Col SW Whittley**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) T Woodall**

230 Signal Squadron

OC **Maj J Higginson**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Orr**

Op FORTIFY 2 – by Lt Hetherington

On 13 January, in a country not too far away, fifteen brave souls from 16 Signal Regiment, embarked on a journey, back to their homeland on what would be the second surge of its kind; to boldly assist our sister regiment 37 Signal Regiment, in their recruitment drive for the newly renamed, Army Reserves.



Reserves... The final frontier...
 These are the voyages of 16 Signal Regiment.
 Its continuing mission:
 To explore the Midlands...
 To seek out new soldiers; new officers...
 To boldly go where we have gone before!

With one highly successful Op FORTIFY under our belt, it was decided that we would once again deploy a 15 man team to assist with recruitment for the Army Reserve. With the new team assembled and fully briefed we departed for the deepest, darkest Midlands. The mission was simple; get as many new potential recruits for the Army Reserves and assist in coaching existing potential recruits to help them through their selection and Phase One training.

Our time with 37 Signal Regiment was split between four key areas; Birmingham, Redditch, Colchester, and Cardiff. We attended the weekly drill nights at all of these locations which gave us the opportunity to meet with and talk to our Army Reserve counterparts in a relaxed atmosphere, i.e. the Squadron bars! We also had the opportunity to dress up in authentic World War One uniforms and handle (decommissioned) WW1 Weapons.



LCpl Powell demonstrates that the PCS really isn't that bad

However during the day we were mainly tasked to run military stands for visiting students from the local college. The students were primarily from the Public Service courses, so they already had a keen interest in either the military or blue light services. Each stand was tailored to give the students a brief overview and demonstration, and in some cases practical application. The stands we hosted included weapon handling, 25m ranges, personal fighting kit, Bowman radios, voice procedure, and of course PT! These stands proved very

popular with the students and gave them a rare opportunity to see close-up what they can look forward to with the Army Reserves.

There were also opportunities to visit local colleges directly and host mini exercises. By far the most successful exercise involved immersing the students in a scenario in which they would be required to send A-H reports using the correct voice procedure. A description received of the author as being a pasty, balding Irishman in his late thirties did not endear the particular potential candidate to the team and the target of 30,000 Reserves seemed farther away then ever.

With the end of another successful Op FORTIFY under our belts and having made some new friends in the Army Reserves we returned to Germany in the knowledge that we had achieved our aim.

Exercise FREE FLIGHT – by Sig Driver

Having only been with the Squadron for two weeks, I returned from completing the AAPT course to find myself deployed straight out of the door on to Ex FREE FLIGHT, an exercise designed to trial and test the Regiment's new trunk system; Falcon. 230 Signal Squadron's role was to support 255 in this endeavour.

My war was fought from behind the service/ERT desk, where **LCpl Warken, LCpl Gale, LCpl Clarke** and I provided 1st Line Support to the DII and OTES assets used by the Regiment. Staff users would also come to the help desk for user accounts and impexing, as well as the use of FRT vehicles. From my previous experiences of working in an HQ



The Squadron prepares for deployment



environment, I had never seen the installation of DII terminals before and it was a valuable insight into the effort required to make these systems operational. It was also an impressive achievement that the Regiment has been able to engineer DII to the UK through Falcon and provide 100+ users over 2 networks; both restricted and secret.

As the Falcon system was still ironing out faults, the network was supported by Bowman detachments deployed from both field squadrons as well as a Reacher detachment to provide alternate bearer communications to the UK. This was operated by **LCpl Young** and **LCpl Plant**, as well as **Sig Collard** and **Sig Harper**.

Despite the long working days, the Squadron was still keen to keep on top of its personal fitness. Both day and night shifts had a PT session every day in attempt to raise the physical standards as rapidly as the trade standards were progressing. As the newest PTI I certainly had my work cut out.

By the time the exercise was completed the Regiment had achieved some impressive successes with the integration of Falcon. All in all this was a really successful exercise and it gave everyone the right to enjoy a well deserved weekend and a hearty Squadron barbeque.

255 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj A Biggs**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Steers**

BA(G) Indoor Climbing Championships – by Sgt Brown

This years annual British Army (Germany) Indoor Climbing Championships took place on 12 Mar 14 at the Big Wall climbing centre in Ahlen, Germany. This well attended event draws teams from across Germany and 16 Signal Regiment was no exception. Managing to get away from the Regiments demanding FALTAT Exercise - Ex LONG LEASH; the team of 4 individuals from 255 (Bahrain) Signal Squadron set off early that morning, hoping to get a good warm up before the competition started. Team leader **Lt Levens** was joined by **SSgt Powell**, **Sgt Brown** and **Sig Langdale**.

The championship was a speed climbing competition, with teams racing against each other over 5 different routes, with each having a 3 minute time limit. Having little speed climbing

experience in the team we were understandably nervous, but as it transpired our nervousness was misplaced. The first 2 routes proved no problem to the team, with an amazing time of 27 seconds by **Sig Langdale** on one route. The third was more complex, requiring a little more thinking and less speed, but all our team still managed to conquer it. The longer route of climb 4 proved too slippery for **SSgt Powell**, costing him 25 points from his maximum score of 500. This final score of 475 was shared by **Sgt Brown** as climb 5 defeated him at the top too.

Once all the teams had finished the scores were added and individuals broken down into groups. Those of us that managed 450 or higher were placed in the Open category with those of a maximum 500 placed in the Elites. Then each category had a climb off, seeing which person could scale the highest in the fastest time. Although all finalists were experienced climbers both the Open and Elite routes proved too complex and long for completion with only one climber managing to reach the summit.

Once the event was completed 16 Signal Regiment managed to come home with an impressive hoard of trophies. With 2nd place in the Team event, **Sgt Brown** coming 3rd in the Open, **SSgt Powell** coming home with both the 2nd in Open and 2nd in the Veterans category. However it was **Sig Langdale** that earned the most plaudits as he achieved 1st place in the under 21s category.



The trophy haul!



21st SIGNAL REGIMENT COLERNE



OC ROG **Maj C S Budding**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) G Tiplady**

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Capt D Taylor**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) D Stedman**

After ECI, RSIT, PDI and MTFI inspections, Support Squadron continues to support those deployed on operations. The welfare officer, **Capt Phil Jenkinson**, and his team, **Sgt Mick Case** and **LCpl Zoe Cairney**, have organised various excursions to Bristol Zoo and Cadbury World which have all been extremely well supported by the families of the deployed

personnel. With adventure training high on the agenda, members of the Squadron have recently attended Exercise BEAUFIGHTER SKIER, based in Chamrousse, France. This was an excellent opportunity for skiers of all levels to gain their Ski Foundation Level One or just to improve their techniques. The Adjutant, **Capt Alison Sargeant** and **WO1 (RSM) Tiplady** both took on the Olympic Black Run without incident and also became increasingly competitive on the ski-cross course. The RSM would have done better if he hadn't insisted on skiing over every bump to "get some air".

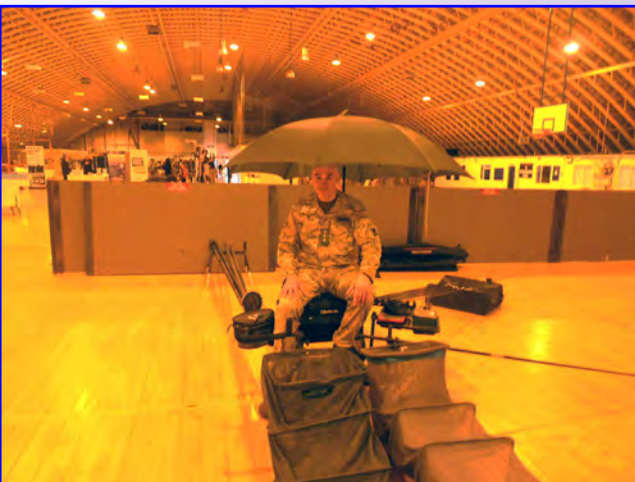
The SSI, **SSgt Chris Walsh**, and his staff held the annual Health Fair which was extremely well supported by outside agencies. The aim of the event was to allow OIC Sports the opportunity





Jimmy on skis

to display their respective sports; OIC Match Angling, **Capt Dave Taylor** required half the gymnasium to show off his myriad of equipment and teach principles of stalking fish. Sports reps received a lot of interest and picked up some potential regimental stars of the future. The health fair provided personnel with a variety of information and activities, including sports massage and healthy eating. Many were astounded at the amount of sugar contained in popular energy drinks.



Gone Fishing



Unit Health Fair



Who would win out of a POLARM instructor and a Transformer?



Healthy eating promotion at the Health Fair

The Squadron has seen the usual turn over of personnel which included saying farewell to **WO1 (RSM) Brown** who leaves on commissioning and a warm welcome to **WO1 (RSM) Tiplady** and his family. **WO1 (RSM) Tiplady** has been quick to identify the Regiment has a few “clowns pockets” that he will get amongst in the next few weeks.

Exercise BEAUFIGHTER SKIER (15 – 22 Mar)
– by SSgt Andy Carr

Three members of the Squadron deployed on the Regimental Skiing trip to the French Alps. The party consisted of me (**SSgt Carr**), **Cpl Craig Duckett** and **Sig Luke Price**. Our epic journey started on the Friday evening with a nice drive from York to Gatwick Airport. On arrival we managed to return the hire car and try to get some sleep in a deserted terminal until we were awoken by the arrival of **Lt McClelland** with the rest of the Regimental party from Colerne.

We left a dark, cold and wet Gatwick to arrive in a nice warm and sunny Grenoble wondering if there would be any snow left for us to ski on. On arrival in resort thankfully we found that the pistes did have snow on. After people had collected their ski hire, we were issued our CILOR to go and buy food to cook for the week as we had split down into self-catering apartments. The shopping went well until I made coffee for everyone only to discover that I had bought Icing sugar, (a bit of a new taste sensation there). We all had our version of ‘Come Dine with Me’ as we decided to take turns in cooking and tried to out-do each other with little extras and innovative starters and deserts. Needless to say our apartment ate very well throughout the week.



We hit the slopes on Monday for what can only be described as a week of snow with tropical temperatures. The slopes were nice and icy in the morning but as temperatures climbed to the high teens in the afternoon it became slushy. We split into 2 groups, those of us who had skied before and those who hadn't. The week went very well and thanks to **Cpl Craig 'Darcy Bussell' Duckett** we all got video footage put to music of our exploits. **Sig Luke Price** also received the award for the worst meal cooked for us as he forgot to add the spices to the chicken fajitas and put them in a bowl for us.

All in all the week was very good and everyone had a great time on the slopes and we all managed to chuckle at each other with the occasional wipe out.

Deployed Families Trip to Cadbury World – by LCpl Zoe Cairney (Welfare JNCO)

On Sun 23 Mar, 14 families of the soldiers deployed on HERRICK 19 left Colerne for a fortnightly organised trip, this time to Cadbury World. The UWO, **Capt Jenkinson**, kicked off the fun by announcing a raffle which got the atmosphere on the bus to a good level, and the kids were handed a lucky bag each full of chocolate before we even got there!

Upon our arrival we were bundled off the bus and greeted by an "Oompa Loompa" and we waited excitedly for our tour to start. The doors opened, and after receiving the first instalment of chocolate bars, we were ushered into a Victorian style indoor street, where we learned how John Cadbury started out in business as a tea seller.

We made our way around the factory learning how chocolate is made, from cocoa pods to packaged bars, to various "check points" where we were given yet more chocolate bars and tasters, much to our dismay. We saw the world's biggest Easter egg which amazingly weighed 9 stone and had a tiny chocolate town crafted inside it, wisely guarded by glass. From there, the children, UWO and Welfare SNCO, **Sgt Case**, enjoyed the kiddies car ride through a village of Oompa Loompas and singing cocoa beans, they were beaming when the emerged from it and I could see their disappointment when it was over!



The World's biggest Easter Egg

The tour conveniently ended at an enormous Cadbury shop, where the UWO/SNCO bought their 3rd round of chocolate and the families took advantage and loaded up on more chocolate for Easter. From there we made our way to the restaurant situated next to the shop and enjoyed a Sunday lunch laid on by the Welfare Team. The children worked off the energy from their chocolate consumption in the nearby play area and the adults had a well-deserved cuppa (because walking around all day eating chocolate is exhausting!!), before we piled back on the bus, and made our way back to Colerne.

A truly fantastic day had by all. The welfare team thank everybody that was involved, including the families and Cadbury World for their help in this successful and enjoyable day. We look forward to our next organised event in the near future.

214 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj S Bennett**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) McDiarmid**

Exercise BEAUFIGHTER COMMUNICATOR II – by LCpl Chris Roberts

Ex BEAUFIGHTER COMMUNICATOR II, held over the period 31 Mar – 4 Apr 14, was a Squadron level training event aimed at proving capabilities of detachment commanders and their crews in Bowman communications, including administration in the field.

The week started with lessons in Alexander Hall with a competent presentation on RADHAZ, by **Sig Bracher**, followed shortly by RADCON, by **Cpl Cooper**. The afternoon was filled with Combat training using the Combat suit in the Yeomanry Training Facility where the Detachment commanders and crew set up their detachment symbology and utilised the overlay feature for situational awareness.

During the lesson phase we focused on operator trade specific lessons which comprised of antenna calculations conducted by **Sig Kay** and principles of a RRB, inclusive of RRB configuration, given by **Cpl Neary**.

Now comes the exercise phase where **Sig Hadley**, **Sig Pomfret** and **Sig Bishop**, acting as the detachment commanders, utilised their crew to set up their detachments, while being overseen by **Sgt (Ops Officer/YofS) Norton**, **Cpl Neary** and myself. The detachment commanders utilised this time to shine in order for their Class 2 workbooks to be completed.

After a short drive to Strensall ranges, and the lack of gate opening from the one and only **Sig Barker-Magowan**, we



Getting set up



moved up the track where the detachment commanders sited their detachments on suitable ground. Now Ex BEAUFIGHTER COMMUNICATOR II really kicked in; ready, steady, go, time is ticking. Comms. Cam. Comfort.

While this part of the exercise was progressing nicely, **Cpl Neary** was assessing **Sig Bishop** on how he handled being a detachment commander. **Sig Bishop's** detachment stayed within Impfal Bks to act as the headquarters element for real life traffic simulation.

After an hour or so, **Sig Pomfret** was ready to present his detachment. After vigorously searching for something to pick him up on, I found nothing worth a shout or scream about, however the erected mast was not straight. **Sig Bodman** was the man who had the delights of re-siting the mast under the close supervision of his detachment commander.

During this time, **Sig Hadley** had also completely finished with the initial set up; this shifted our focus onto his detachment. After he explained the advantages and disadvantages of using a camouflage net, he decided it would be a good idea to move the exhaust extensions for the generator and vehicle outside the confines of the net so as not to suffer the consequences of carbon monoxide (wise decision!).



Sig Bodman re-siting his mast

Overall, this phase of the exercise was a success. The crew worked extremely hard (although with a little direction from myself) for their respective detachment commanders, which enabled them to concentrate on establishing communications. After all, this is our bread and butter! Further to this, it enabled them to work through the elements required to become a Class 2 Operator in the Royal Corps of Signals.



ENDEX

Exercise CHIMERA STRIKE - by SSgt Andy Carr

The Squadron deployed from York to Catterick Training Area on a cold and windy Monday morning. On arrival at Catterick the exercising troops were met by **Sgt Rob Vaughan** who gave a pyrotechnics demonstration which proved somewhat comical when he disappeared partly down a drainage ditch. After this the ammunition was handed out and the Squadron then patrolled off for some 5km to their harbour area, led by **2Lt Dale** and **Cpl Cooper**. On arrival in the wood block the troops quickly set about establishing their harbour area while the DS and enemy moved into their highly luxurious farm a few kilometres away.

As evening drew in the troops received the tasking to recce two farm locations. Off went the first recce only to discover to their peril that a Company from ITC Catterick had already moved in, giving **Sig 'I will use my torch' Butler** the shock of his life. The next recce was of the enemy location. The section did very well until they strayed too close and set off one of the trip flares we had set for them.

The following morning saw the troops leave at staggered times to patrol across the area, and surprisingly enough, run straight into the enemy, complete with in depth positions. Their attack saw them hopping either side of a deep gully which for **Sig 'Sol' Campbell** proved a bit too hard as he ended up sliding down the side of it for about 30m, leaving him to finish the attack running in a strange manner. The following attack on the enemy position led to the grenadier **Sig 'forgetful' Pickard** forgetting to pull the pin on the grenade before throwing it.



Cpl Field and Sig Campbell hatch a plan

That evening the enemy, with the help of the DS, attacked the harbour area in strength, creating confusion all round, not least amongst the enemy when **Lt Kandola** fell into a stream and **Sgt 'Cannon Ball' Vaughan** ran into a tree when blinded by a trip flare!

Crack of dawn the next morning, the troops moved out of the harbour on an advance to battle. They hit the positions one after another with their reserve coming through on the re-group to take the next position. All went well until the attack on the 4th position led to **Sig Ben 'Tom Daley' Hadley** tripping and diving head first into a boggy stream instead of



Members of 214 Sqn on the final assault... that stream looks inviting!



throwing the grenade at the final position to destroy the enemy, aka bad woman **Sig Tash Szalay**. The Troop took its first casualty of the assault when it was decided **Sig Cockburn** would be blown up, resulting in a lung bursting casualty extraction over 2km to the glorious shout of "ENDEX". A very worthwhile exercise which reminded and refreshed our junior soldiers on operations conducted away from FOB locations.

220 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Stowell MBE**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Robertson**

Ex MERCURY SNOW RIDER V – by Sig Llewellyn

Ex MSR 5 was the fifth annual snowboarding camp held in Rauris, Austria organised by the Royal Signals Snowboarding (RSS) Committee. Held over two weeks from 3-15 March, its aims were to promote the upcoming sport within the Corps, provide training for novice and experienced riders alike and to subsequently provide a competitive environment for all attendees through the Parallel Giant Slalom (PGS), Slopestyle (SS) and Snowboarder Cross (SBX) events.

2014 saw the largest attendance to date with 150+ personnel from almost all units within the Corps, including reserve elements and some personnel from the Intelligence Corps. Of this figure, approximately half were novice riders with the remainder making up the Open category; a mix of intermediate and advanced riders including the Corps Team who used the exercise as a chance to select new members for the upcoming Army Championships.

Flying the flag from 21 Sig Regt was **2Lt Baxter, Sig Matt Parsons** and **Sig James Llewellyn**. A comparatively small



Sig Llewellyn chooses camouflage that blends with his environment...

contingent (compared to 1 (UK) Armd Div who brought 15 riders to the party), we were accommodated in a six person apartment at the Schönblick Mountain Resort and Spa with the 3 members of the 32 Sig Regt team.

Week one was the training phase of the exercise, conducted by the excellent Dutch instructors of Ripstar. Progression was smooth for most of the 21 Sig Regt team, although **2Lt David Baxter** sadly managed to break his wrist on the morning of day one and was therefore unable to participate in any events or show us how good he really is. Next time Sir! The week was finished off with a thank you and farewell party for the Ripstar instructors in few of the local drinking establishments.

Week two was the competition phase, starting on Sunday with the seeding race for the novice's PGS race. The remainder of the week followed the pattern of conducting a seeding race first, in order to put all race participants into an order based upon ability and to decide who had qualified for the actual race to follow. **Sig Parsons** successfully qualified for all three events, doing particularly well in the Slope-style and ultimately finishing 16th overall in an Open category of around 80 people – well done **Matt**. **2Lt Baxter** kindly aided the committee during the race events and I unfortunately did not qualify for any of the races, although I did have a good time – Austrian beer is particularly good for commiserating with.

We left on the Saturday morning for the long drive back home (compared to the outward journey when we stopped overnight at 16 Sig Regt), and this time stopped in Salzburg for two hours so I could indulge in my interest of Baroque architecture and elaborate torture devices – two subjects that Hohensalzburg Castle in Salzburg has plenty of! As well as the snowboarding itself there was plenty of time for unwinding, in particular the Friday night fancy dress party!

Ex MSR 5 was a well organised event and our thanks go to all involved with the planning and running of the camp. Thanks also to **2Lt Baxter** for helping the committee despite his bulky cast, **Sig Parsons** for driving **2Lt Baxter** to and from hospital when required and to Chris, Stuart and Marcus for an enjoyable fortnight in the apartment. See you all next year!

Exercise BEAUFIGHTER OBSTACLE – by LCpl Johnston

This was a 24 hour obstacle course fundraising event, where 22 soldiers tackled the assault course on camp twice on the hour. With all funds going to a local school in Corsham, the theme was overcoming 'Obstacles' in order to achieve your goals.

The day started off promptly at 0800 with a quick briefing on the structure of the event. 0900 was our first time over the course. Naturally, we vaulted over it with a high level of



Job done... Time for work!



audible banter. On the way back into the gymnasium (our home for the day) I'm sure I even heard someone say "I could do this all week". As the day continued, gradually the banter lessened and bodies became more obviously bruised. We however, were all determined that we were going to complete this arduous event.

At 2100, it had become clear that morale was starting to take a blow. As if by magic **Sig Elston** appeared with thirty cheeseburgers, freshly purchased from a well known fast food chain. This good deed changed everything! All involved were instantly revitalised and ready to take on the coming hours.



Sig Ronald McElston boosts morale during the silent hours

Recovery time between runs became shorter and waking people to continue the runs became a challenge within itself.



My personal highlight was at 0400. 22 soldiers walking from the Gymnasium to the Obstacle Course, and not a single word said. Pitch black, raining, foggy, silent.

At this level of fatigue the group (as a collective) adopted the slogan #EveryManForHimself which was spearheaded by **Cpl 'for the lads' Barrett**. This meant it was possible to smash the course, and then get your head down.

As the sun came up the mood changed. Maybe because we all needed help getting through the simplest of obstacles or maybe because a display of solidarity was what was in order to finish the event. Together, we all completed the 24hr Obstacle Course and raised a substantial amount for the school.

More importantly, no one was injured during the event and the *Samuel Afolabi* award remains locked away for now!

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22nd SIGNAL REGIMENT STAFFORD



CO Lt Col LC Westerman
RSM WO1 (RSM) A Fraser

217 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC Maj KM Biggins
SSM WO2 (SSM) JB Stephenson

Exercise STAFFORD BEACON 2014 – by Cpl Thaman

The Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) is a highly capable multinational, NATO organisation which is fully ready for rapid deployment worldwide at short notice. In order to prepare to support future potential ARRC deployments as well as train the individuals, the Regiment conducted Ex STAFFORD BEACON (Ex SB) over the period of 10 - 28 Mar 14. The exercise was conducted in different phases and locations within the United Kingdom, with each Squadron and Troop given a specific mission. Alpha Troop's mission was to prepare and deploy an ICS node that could support a Brigade Headquarters within Nesscliff Training Area and then to be ready to re-deploy to Swynnerton Training Area.

The Squadron and Regimental level PACEX was conducted in Stafford camp in order to check all CIS equipment, prepare, engineer and test prior to the deployment. Interconnecting voice, data, Multi Conferencing Unit (MCU) between different nodes was successfully achieved during this week. Upon arrival in Nesscliff, our main task involved setting up the detachment and achieving connectivity with another ICS Det in Stafford using the Reacher Satellite Detachment. We had to establish our detachment in a building of opportunity, in this case a farmhouse. This provided the opportunity to deploy into a similar setting that we might experience if we were to deploy for 'real'; and involved considerations such as how we power the equipment, and more importantly how we keep it dry! Cpl Wilsons' det created an inventive solution using hessian when the 'watertight' building they were in starting leaking during a hail storm.

As well as deploying Magpie ICS and Reacher, the Squadron also deployed several Bowman Dets. This provided a great opportunity for the CS Operators in the Sqn to practise their radio skills; HF vertical radiators, droopy dipoles and sloping wires were all tested with varying degrees of success. It also proved a useful exercise for route selection, with one of the dets very nearly becoming bogged in some marshy ground!

The 3 week long exercise not only tested the Regiment's ability to deploy and provide services but also provided invaluable training experience to the detachment commanders and crew. The individuals were able to learn, train and apply their knowledge practically, overcoming several technical challenges. I and the crew learnt a great deal from this exercise and are looking forward to the forthcoming ARRC exercises.

Exercise HOPTON CENTAUR 1 – by Cpl Priestley

On the clear, calm and cool morning of 25 February, soldiers and officers of the mighty 217 Signal Squadron formed up outside the Regiment's secure garages to mark the start of Ex HOPTON CENTAUR 1. After a short brief delivered by OC 217, Maj Biggins, and the SSM, WO2 (SSM) Stephenson, we were given an outline of the week's main events and what the Squadron aimed to get out of the training package. Once that was completed we were sent to the cookhouse to get

some breakfast down us to fuel the day's activities.

Event one was the kit check; nothing unusual but the sketch was that for every item missing a point was accrued that counted toward the participating section's scores, ultimately deciding the best overall section of the week. Individuals' recollection of basic training seemed to vary with some people turning up with the opinion that the "travel light" option was the best way. Most however just went off the Regt SOP kit-list. 3 Section Comd, LCpl McInnes, did a fantastic job of squaring away his section, ensuring everyone in his section was up to scratch and good to go!

With the kit check done and dusted, the 3 sections then went their separate ways to do the round robin on stands that had to be completed. The three stands were 'model making' by Cpl Crosfield, 'duties of a sentry' by Cpl Thomas and 'quick attack estimate' with Lt Owens. Whilst these stands were not physically demanding they were designed to bring on the skills of the younger, less experienced soldiers and also serve as a remind and revise for the older and bolder amongst us.

Tuesday was a similar experience with lessons being in the areas of reports and returns, MISTAT and a loaded march for PT. Wednesday was the day we were loaded onto TCVs and sent off to Swynnerton Training Area. After a quick drive or snooze, depending on if you had a wheel in front of your seat or not, we quickly arrived and leapt off of the transport to receive our orientation brief and accommodation. The day's main training objectives were patrolling techniques, section attack practice, section drills, pyro demo and a comprehensive lesson on the 6 section battle drills - wonderfully demonstrated by the Gurkhas of Alpha Troop. It was a hard, rewarding day, however we were much more prepared for Thursday's event which was the Centaur Cup Challenge!

The challenge was a three stand round robin; navigation led by SSgt Sim, which was a 2 hour run around camp collecting orienteering points, a brilliant section attack DS'd by SSgt Graham with a nice little CASEVAC at the end and finally, to top it all off, there was a cheeky assault course. The best time, taking pride of place, this year went to LCpl 'Speedy' Amar and Cpl 'Slammer' Crosfield.

Events completed we bugged out of Swynnerton and returned to Stafford to rendezvous at the Falcon Club for a good end of Exercise knees up. The Squadron also bade farewell to Cpl (now Sgt) Thomas; we wish him the very best of luck in the future at 252 (Hong Kong) Signal Squadron. Finally the Best Section was announced, and the clear the winner was 3 Section led by LCpl McInnes and LCpl Glasgow. The trophy was presented and promptly drunk out of by every member of the section, champion times!

222 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC Maj H Frost
SSM SSgt Finn

1 Signal Brigade Boxing Championships – by Sig Thomas

On 17 Feb the 22 Signal Regiment boxing team under OIC boxing Lt Malan and coach Sig Thomas started full time training, knowing in four weeks each of them would be stepping into the ring for the first time. Training started hard and got harder, due to only the four weeks to get ready, with



plenty of extra weight from Christmas leave that needed to go. Starting at 0700 every morning and finishing at 1700 it was not for the faint hearted. Every day started with a fat burner run (which the boxers would complain was never slow enough to be a fat burner run) followed by breakfast, then abs, before spending the day learning and perfecting the basics, with an additional abs session at the end of day circuit. The effort put forth by the boxers to get fit to fight was astounding, everyone dropped to make weight; notably **Cfn Phillips** who lost 18kg in just under 6 weeks. Unfortunately **Cfn Phillips** was not able to fight on the night as during training he tried to block a punch with his face instead of his gloves as taught and ended up with concussion. From then on he took the role of assistant coach where his pad work was invaluable. Most of the training took place at 'The Right Stuff' boxing gym in Stafford. With help from **Andy Whitehall**, the gym's owner, whose training and support gave us the edge we needed to go into the competition.

Everyone made weight for the morning of the prelims and thankfully everyone who made it through the training was able to get a bout, even though due to numbers in weight categories some were fighting each other. This made it hard to know who to cheer for on the night. **Sig Lewis** and **Sig Rogerson**, both 22 Sig Regt, faced off in the prelims. Despite a valiant effort from **Sig Rogerson**, **Sig Lewis** came away with a unanimous win, setting him up to fight on the main event in light middleweight.

On the night of the main event the first bout was the bantam weight; due to the other bantam fighters coming in at 1.5kg over weight both were from 22 Sig Regt. **Sig Kamal** and **Sgt Rai** gave an outstanding performance, with **Sig Kamal** showing the speed and skill which gave him the win.



Sig Kamal and Sgt Ramesh trade blows

Our next bout of the night was between **LCpl Coulter** and **LCpl Turbitt**. **LCpl Coulter** showed tremendous bravery but was outmatched by **LCpl Turbitt's** speed and skill, the bout being stopped in the first with the towel thrown in. **Sig Lewis** was then in for his second bout having won the prelims, but was stopped in the third round by a heavy right hook which gave his opponent the win by a TKO. It was then **Sig Corp's** turn to get in the ring, having never boxed before, he was fighting a three bouter, with much more boxing experience than him. Despite this, he put his training to use and after three skillfull and close rounds he took the win.

Lt Griffiths was up next at light heavy, trying to put his height to good use, but was unfortunately taken down by a hook to the head which stopped the bout by a knock out. This left the last points to win in the competition up to **Cfn Seaton** at cruiser weight. After being punched back to the ropes by his opponent he came out strong pushing back with heavy shots in the first round; both boxers showed epic determination trying to get as many shots in as possible. At the start of the second round both boxers were visibly exhausted from the

first round, but still as determined, making the second and third reminiscent of the end of Rocky 2; with the boxers exhausted trading shots back and forth with utmost determination. Towards the end of the third round many of the crowd were on their feet, I, by AIBA rules as the coach, should have been sitting on a chair two metres from the ring quietly. Instead, I had my hands on the canvas and head through the ropes screaming at the top of my voice, "GET YOUR HAND UP EDDY, GET THE JAB OUT!" The effort paid off and **Cfn Seaton** sealed our competition victory with a close win of 29-28 28-29 29-28.



The Winning Team

The effort and bravery put forward by the boxers during training and on the night was exceptional. The boxers of 22 Sig Regt are looking forward to defending the title next year!

248 GURKHA SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj S Smith**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Laxman**

November Troop Gathering – by Sig Reban Rai

On 7 Feb 14, we had our first gathering with our Troop Commander, **Lt Morphet**, and other members of our Troop. The event was organised mainly to increase our cohesion within the group and gain a better understanding of each other. **LCpl Santa** planned and prepared the event in the Beacon Amenities Centre, and did a fantastic job.

We began our function by having drinks at the bar where everyone had a chit-chat. During this period we got to socialise with Troop members who were away on long exercises, courses and even new Troop members who joined us from another Regiment. Approximately half way through the evening, we had some starter snacks (tipan tapan) before



There was clearly something wrong with our acting



going into the next activity which was a small game for seniors and officers.

It was a guessing game where one member of the group had to act out what was written on a hidden piece of paper while his team members had to guess it. Everyone including the audience had lots of fun and really enjoyed the game. Next, we had our own musical entertainment from some individuals and it was a good chance for them to display their talents in singing and playing musical instruments. **Lt Morphet, Sgt Barun, Cpl Raj, LCpl Kiran, Sig Sandesh** and **Sig Kamal** all had a go and did a great job. **Sig Sandesh** organised and led the games for the night and throughout the entertainment he kept the audience captivated!



Sig Sandesh doing his thing!

Following the game, we had a delicious cultural Gurkha curry dinner together while continuing to socialise as the night passed by. In summary, the Troop gathering was a very enjoyable time that everyone appreciated. Thank you **LCpl Santa** for organising such a fun event!

Exercise KHUKURI BEACON – by LCpl Santa Limbu

248 Gurkha Signal Squadron had a CT Level 2 confirmatory exercise held from 24 - 27 Feb 14, in order to prepare for the CT Level 3 (Regimental level) exercise at Swynnerton Training Camp. Since receiving Falcon detachments early last year this was the best opportunity that the Squadron had to conduct a communication exercise purely focusing on Falcon. Everyone within the Squadron was very interested to see how much we could achieve. As a result, the Detachment Comds felt more pressure to achieve the goal of Sqn Ops. Prior to deploying on the exercise, a PACEX was conducted between all three Falcon detachments. Much of the planning was led by **Sgt Sanjay Rai** and **Sgt Kiran Gurung**. During the PACEX, we



248 GSS deployment for Ex KHUKURI BEACON

progressed and were successfully able to establish links between the three detachments via fibre. However, when we tried to establish RF links between the detachments, it was unsuccessful. By restarting the whole detachment and changing some settings we overcame the problem.

On 24 Feb 14 we deployed to Swynnerton. On arrival, an initial brief was given by **SSgt (Fofs) Pratap** about the aims of the exercise. At 1345hrs, N Tp received orders from **SSgt Jagatram Rai**, and at 1430hrs N Tp deployed to the grid as given by Sqn Ops. Once there, we set up two nodes with antenna on masts. On the first day we couldn't establish the link by 1830hrs, and were instructed to tear down our node. On the next day, we began to set up the detachment and the N Tp CP and we managed to establish a link between the two other detachments around midday.



LCpl Santa wouldn't rather be anywhere else!

During the exercise **Sig Bhuwaneshwor** and I conducted lessons on a Falcon overview and the power side of a Falcon det, in order to provide more knowledge to other members of the Troop. On 27 Feb 14, we received a visit from our Commanding Officer, **Lt Col Westerman**. At 1200, ENDEX was called by Sqn Ops. By the end of the exercise the Troop successfully achieved its goal.

Farewell to the CO and Regt 2IC of 22 Signal Regiment

– by LCpl Samir Rai

On 22 Feb 14 a farewell function was organised for the CO, **Lt Col Ronnie Westerman**, and the Regimental 2IC, **Maj Bob Pye** and their families by the Stafford Gurkha Community. The aim of the function was to express our heartfelt gratitude and thanks to these two distinguished personalities of the Regiment. The CO's strong command, leadership and management played a very important role during the difficult time of redundancy, assisting soldiers to transfer into other Arms and Services and aiding the difficult transition into a new career as civilians, for which every member of the community is ever thankful. She embraced and supported Gurkha Kaida in every aspect with keen interest and thoughtfulness taking part in many events organised by the Community and 248 Gurkha Signals Squadron. **Maj Bob Pye**, who previously served with QG SIGNALS, understood our Kaida and played a vital role supporting the Stafford Gurkha Community and wider QG SIGNALS throughout his tenure as the Regimental Second in Command.

Under the supervision of the overall event co-ordinator **Sgt Sanjay Rai**, Gym 2 in Beacon Barracks was set up for the function. All of the Stafford Gurkha Community, including families, assembled in Gym 2 in the evening for the function. Upon the arrival of the main guest, all Senior NCOs and Officers lined up in front of main entrance with their families to greet them. The guests and their families were piped in by the Sqn Piper, **LCpl Samir Rai**. The evening commenced with



the serving of Tipan-Tapan and drinks. The guests were busy talking with the soldiers and families until the main meal announcement was made by **Cpl Sanjoyhang Rai**.



22SR Gurkha community with the outgoing CO and Regt 2IC

A local band comprising talented members of 248 Gurkha Sig Sqn, formed under **Cpl Dhankumar Gurung**, performed live Nepali and English songs to entertain during the main meal which was deliciously prepared by Gurkha chefs. The entertainment was then followed by a number of cultural dances organised by **Sgt Barun Sherchan** and his team. **Maj Simon Smith**, OC 248, and **Capt Amrit Gurung**, 248 2IC, presented Kothimora Khukuri to both the Commanding Officer and Regiment Second in Command, as their farewell gift on behalf of the Stafford Gurkha Community.

Maj Bob Pye expressed his emotional attachment to the QG SIGNALS. He said he was honoured and privileged to have worked alongside the Gurkhas. The CO elaborated by saying that Queen's Gurkha Signals' soldiers are the Queen's servants and take pride in its role, truly understanding it and acting as expected. She also mentioned that she felt fortunate to observe three QG SIGNALS attestation parades. She described the unquestionable loyalty shown by the young recruits and all the people she has worked with in 22 Signal Regiment and across the Army. She said it is an example to British colleagues for loyalty towards the British people and our Sovereign and that she also admired the Gurkha hospitality. The presentation ended with more praise and the evening proceeded with 'Khushi ko Nautch' which everyone enjoyed to the fullest.



OC presenting the CO with a kothimora khukuri

Overall, it was a very successful event. It is always a sad moment to bid farewell, especially to two key personalities of the Regiment. As they say, 'saying goodbye is meeting again'. The Stafford Gurkha Community wishes them and their families the very best for the future.

252 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj AB Arthurton**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) S Middleton**

Exercise HONG KONG DRAGON 2014 - by LCpl Ross

Ex HONG KONG DRAGON was an opportunity for soldiers to deploy to Ayrshire, Scotland and learn field craft skills and get an introduction into deer stalking and the management of wild deer.

We travelled over two days, stopping over night in the very deserted Halton Training Camp, Lancashire. We arrived in Girvan where we were greeted by our hosts **Ann** and **Sqn Ldr (Retd) Chris Dalton** who made us feel welcome.

After introductions and a brief on the events that would be taking place over the course of the next 24 hours, we headed up to the makeshift 100m range at the back of their land where we had practice shoots with a .243 Tikka T3 light rifle from the prone and standing with poles. We were taken through a lesson on the variety of deer we might encounter, including which ones we could shoot and where to shoot them to make the cleanest and most humane kill.



WO2 (SSM) Sean Middleton takes aim during range practice

As the evening came we were driven out to different locations to stalk deer, the majority of us waiting in fixed positions on high chairs against a tree. Within seconds of me arriving at my chair I had heard a gunshot over the high winds. **Lt Col Sally Arthurton** had got her first deer with the



A thorough debrief

continued on page 59



Corps Subscriptions

(The One Day's Pay Scheme)



What is the One Day's Pay Scheme?

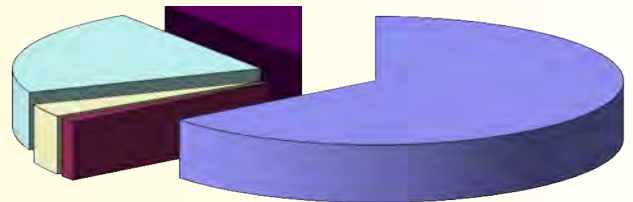
The One Day's Pay Scheme was introduced in 1965. It is an administrative procedure, adopted Army-wide, for the collection of subscriptions to Corps or Regimental Charities and Associations from serving officers and soldiers. JPA deducts monthly subscriptions to the scheme from an individual's pay and then distributes the total monthly subscriptions.

How much do I pay?

Since 1965 the Corps has encouraged all Royal Signals soldiers to contribute 110% of one day's gross pay annually to the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund (RSBF). In 1997 Warrant Officers and SNCO's elected to raise their subscriptions from 110% to 140% to enable them to establish a Sergeants' Messes Fund to purchase silver and other property to enhance sergeants' messes throughout the Corps and to subsidise main mess functions. Officers contribute 190% of a day's gross pay annually through the same scheme. This helps to fund Corps Guest Nights and a small number of formal dinners and lunches each year as well as most of the costs of Corps Heritage and of the Royal Signals Institution.

All payments, which are notified through individual pay statements, are deducted monthly by the Army's pay system to the RSBF's nominated bank account. This pie chart gives a break-down of the main areas of income that the RSBF received in 2013:

- Legacies = £16.2K
- Donations = £43.7K
- Investment = £290.5K
- Other Sources = £124.9K



What is the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund?

The RSBF is a registered charity, not a military (MOD) fund. It operates under a Charity Commission scheme specifies the charity's aims (known as "objects") and how subscriptions and income from other sources can be used to further them. In essence, these are in 3 main areas:

- Welfare grants to support Signallers or former Signallers and their immediate dependants in need. This includes both Regular and TA personnel and former ATS/WRAC personnel who served in Royal Signals units. In other words, anyone who has worn "Jimmy".
- Grants to support the "morale and efficiency" of the serving Corps.
- Grants to charities with similar aims to the RSBF.





Queen's Gurkha Signals officers and soldiers may also contribute to the RSBF at the same rates. However, the Corps then passes 100% of a day's pay to the Gurkha Welfare Trust which then takes responsibility for ALL welfare grants for QG SIGNALS personnel; the RSBF will, however, consider morale and efficiency grants.

The value of the RSBF, as at 31 December 2013 and including investments, was £9,606,688. This is a great deal of money but it is important to note that we rely heavily on our investment income, as shown in the first pie chart, to supplement the income received from the one day's pay scheme.

Who controls the RSBF?

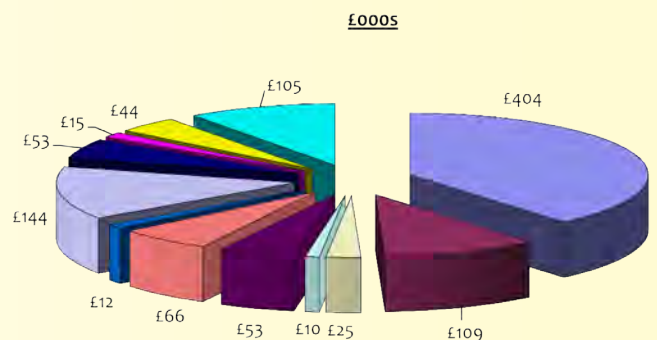
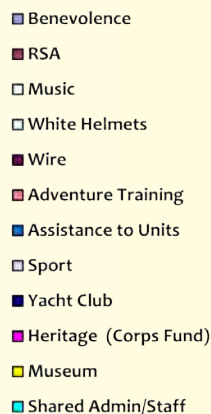
The Master of Signals as head of the Corps Council appoints a board of volunteer directors who, together, form Royal Signals Trustee Ltd (RSTL). Only the RSTL Board of Directors can authorise expenditure against the RSBF. The Corps Accountant prepares annual budgets on their behalf. The activities the charity pursues, and its income and expenditure are also subject to rigorous annual audit. When the audit process is complete, accounts must, under charity law, be passed to the Charity Commission for review and publication on its open website.

What happens when I leave the Army?

When you are discharged from the Army your military pay ceases. At the same time your One Day's Pay subscriptions automatically cease as they are drawn from military pay only (not from military pensions). However, access to benevolence support continues and remains open to you and your immediate dependants.

For what purposes is the money used?

The RSTL Board Directors are legally bound to ensure that all expenditure against the RSBF is in the furtherance of the charitable objects laid down in its Charity Commission scheme. The One Day's Pay scheme subscription income does not cover the full cost, the remainder being made up from investment income, donations and other miscellaneous sources. Money collected in donations is ALL used for benevolence and is not used for morale and efficiency purposes. This pie chart shows, to the nearest thousand pounds, the actual expenditure in 2013.



What do the pie chart slices mean?

- Benevolence.** This is the highest priority for the charity. Under Queen's Regulations, the RSBF must spend at least 50% of its day's pay subscriptions on benevolence. All serving and former members of the Corps and their immediate dependants are eligible to apply for benevolence assistance in times of hardship and financial need, irrespective of whether they paid into the one day's pay scheme or not. The RSBF spent £363,565 on benevolence in 2013 covering 556 individual grants, a £36,000 annual grant to the Army Benevolent Fund (who provide over £100,000 additional support to Signallers in need) and grants to various homes and organisations taking care of disabled or elderly Corps veterans.
- The Royal Signals Association.** The RSA acts as a focus for Corps benevolence and contributes to Royal Signals morale and efficiency by fostering comradeship. The fund pays for central costs for the major RSA events but branches are, otherwise, self-funding.



- **Morale & Efficiency.** The RSBF supports a number of different elements promoting esprit de corps:
 - **The Wire.** This is issued free to all units and every officer and soldier in the Corps ought to be able to read a copy at no charge. Some personnel opt to receive their own copy and pay for this by additional subscription, as do many retired personnel.
 - **Corps Music.** Despite the formation of the Corps of Army Music, the R SIGNALS Band still has a dependency on the Corps to offset the cost of some ceremonial uniforms and the purchase of music. The Northern Band (Reserves) and Royal Signals Pipes and Drums are not funded publicly and, therefore, depend much more heavily on Corps Funds for their financial support.
 - **Corps Sport.** The Corps currently recognises 26 sports and games clubs. The Corps Council and RSTL Directors place a high priority on supporting Corps sport, not just for the “gladiators” but in a process which starts with 11 (RSS) Signal Regiment and is aimed at helping new sportsmen and women develop and succeed. Corps Sport has a budget of £140,000 from Corps Funds in 2014 and this may be increased by external sponsorship.
 - **Adventurous Training.** The Corps assists in providing adventurous training grants for exercises or expeditions approved through the Joint Services Adventurous Training Form (JSATFA) process. Details are contained in Royal Signals Policy Directive 168 and the 2014 budget for this purpose is £85,000.
 - **Royal Signals Yacht Club.** The RSYC maintains a small fleet of yachts, dinghies and wind-surfers for use by Corps personnel as an extra element to adventurous training and sport.
 - **White Helmets.** Although they are self-funding on a day to day basis, the Corps supports the White Helmets in the purchase of vehicles through a capital fund saved at a rate of £10,000 per annum.



- o **Heritage.** The majority of heritage costs are covered by the officers' fund (£30.8K in 2013) although those items benefitting every member of the Corps, such as the Corps Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum, are covered from the main Corps Fund (£14.7K in 2013).
 - o **Museum.** The Museum has been assisted in terms of staff costs whilst preparing for re-accreditation and the overall approach to Museum funding by the RSBF is being addressed as part of a Corps Heritage study.
 - o **Unit Assistance.** The Corps makes a range of grants which support units in different ways, including the provision of funds to assist in the hosting of visits by the Colonel in Chief.
- **Royal Signals Institution.** The RSI is very largely funded by officers' subscriptions (£42K in 2013) and so is not shown in the pie chart but is increasingly becoming more widely available. Other than lectures and seminars, the RSI normally produces two Journals a year and covers the cost of course prizes at DSCIS as well as all Corps Awards.
 - **Shared Staff & Admin Costs.** This is the cost of staff which are shared by all areas (e.g. The Corps Accountant Branch) and common administrative costs including IT and legal fees.

Summary.

The Corps enjoys a high take up rate (currently 96%) of the One Days Pay scheme with new recruits joining during Phase 2 training. This generous support allows the Master of Signals and the trustees of the Royal Signals Benevolent Fund to provide financial assistance to past and serving members of Royal Signals, their dependants and to R SIGNALS units and establishments. If you have a query relating to your personal subscriptions you should address it through your RAO.



aid of **Chris'** dog. Unfortunately for most of us we saw nothing due to the poor weather and visibility. **Sig Alex 'Jonesy' Jones** had one in his sights, but it was far too quick for him. When night had fallen we retired back to Girvan for a delicious meal cooked by **Ann**.

The next day came at 0400hrs for an early stalk. The rain and wind had subsided, yet was still harsh enough for the majority of the deer to not make an appearance. **Cpl Lee Ward** was successful with two kills and saw two fully grown stags rutting.

After another amazing meal, we were then shown the skinning and butchering of a deer carcass, being informed of all the checks done for diseases and how to get the best out of the deer. Not one bit of the deer was wasted, it was amazing how much meat there was on such a small deer.

22 Signal Regiment Boxing - by LCpl Turbitt

The opportunity to box for 22 Sig Regt presented itself in January, with the backing and full support of 252 Sig Sqn. I was released to undergo full time training for the competition being held in March 14, eager to step into the ring. Welcomed as one of their own, I began training with ARRC SP Bn, completing 10 weeks of arduous training that saw 20+ potential boxers reduced to a formidable remaining 9; yet notably there were always the 4 lasses!

Fast forward past the emotional sweat runs, rustling round town in bin bags, epic food moods and many a sparring session that saw blood but never love lost, it was the much anticipated fight night. The competition saw 22 Sig Regt, 30 Sig Regt and my adopted family ARRC SP Bn battle it out in the ring.

My bout was an all 22 Sig Regt final against **LCpl Coulter**, with an electric atmosphere roared on by the unrivalled 252 Sig Sqn support, markedly **LCpl Sarah Wheeler**; it was all about Sqn pride! Fortunately my training prevailed with a first round TKO and 22 Sig Regt took the competition as the overall winning team.

Exercise SNOW RIDER - by Sig Ray

On 1 March 2014, 8 personnel embarked on the mammoth 22 hour drive to Rauris, Austria, to join with the Royal Signals snowboarding camp, Ex SNOW RIDER. The exercise took place over two weeks; a training week led by RipStar and competition week. The snowboarders were split into ability groups and were taken on various slopes for tuition. Learning quickly that beer was cheaper than coke, we all enjoyed our evenings at Rauris.

With the competition week upon us, we competed over three events; slalom, border cross and the free style. **Cpl Rachel Turvey** won all three female open events, with **Sig Monique Ray** picking up all three gold medals available in the female novice category. Sad to leave our luxury chalet after two glorious weeks in the snow, we headed back to the UK, eager to return next year.

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj J Renshaw**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) N Marshall**

Without doubt this last period has been extremely busy for Support Squadron. We have undergone inspections from RSIT and an ECI as well as conducting a Regimental Muster in line with the transfer to MJDI. All this whilst supporting the field Squadrons in their preparation and subsequent

deployment for Ex STAFFORD BEACON, allowing the Regt to test and develop our soldiers in their primary role. The above has been achieved with high success in all areas which is testament to the dedication and commitment of all soldiers within the Squadron.

We have also managed to find time to let our hair down and enjoy a belated Christmas function as well as win the hard fought CO's competition for the second year running. The trophy cabinet is filling up nicely and we are looking forward to defending our reputation in the coming year.

This next period offers the Sqn a chance to re-charge and devote some time to training our soldiers both militarily and personally with PNCO under way and MATTs weeks planned as well as some hard earned AT. There is also the Regimental Battle Camp to look forward to which will see our soldiers deploy to Otterburn to conduct some LFTT. On, on!

Support Squadron Medieval Night - by LCpl Maxwell

On Thursday 13 March Support Squadron held a 'belated' Christmas function in what can only be described as the divinely adorned gymnasium of 22 Signal Regiment, Stafford.

The theme for the evening was Medieval and through the combined efforts of **Sgt White (REME)** and his dedicated committee the scene was perfectly set for an ultimately glorious affair. No stone was left unturned, **Cpl 'laser beam' Daniels** (Metal smith) crafted all specially made items to an excellent standard and **LCpl 'Tash' Maxwells'** exceptionally gifted artistic skills created the backdrops and entrance. **LCpl 'Willi' Williamson** along with the expertise of his wife created the posters, scrolls and table plan and **Sig 'Magic Mike' Aerola** provided all the card tricks of a talented Jester. The efforts of the committee were commended by **Lt Col Westerman (CO)** on the accomplishment of transforming the gym into a castle scene which was worthy of adoration from any low budget West End show.



Diablo at work

As the guests began arriving through a passageway of flame torches, watched over vigilantly by **Cpl Andy Beddows**, they took their seats and awaited arrival of their King and Queen, **Cpl 'Doc' Docherty** and **Pte Jodie Gaunt**. Once settled the banquet began, and **Sgt 'Smudge' Smith** did not disappoint in providing a lavishly delivered spread of an array of meats including duck and rabbit, accompanied by a collection of breads, fruits, and roast vegetables. Definitely a feast fit for a king!

With tankards and goblets charged, let the games begin. Each table was split into 4 houses, with their corresponding Lords and Ladies seated at the top table. It was the job of the



Lord's and Lady's to delegate which of their loyal knights would compete in each event of the tournament. Introducing the games with bags of confidence, **LCpl 'I have no idea what he just said' Jervis** controlled the crowd and the organised chaos extremely well.

In the closing ceremony King Arthur and Queen Guinevere (**Cpl Docherty** and **Pte Gaunt**) were called down to the dance floor to present the prize giving. **SSgt 'Chelle' Denham** and **Cpl 'Mike' Jackson** received best male/female fancy dress and **LCpl '2 names' Sumner** the Lord of the winning team, (REME) received her knighthood.

There was no doubt that the evening turned into a stupendous night. Everyone who had attended made great efforts to look the part, cross dressers included as standard. The combination of the hard-work and engagement of every member of the committee as well as Support Squadrons undisputed reputation of 'knowing how to party' enabled the night to be an auspicious and memorable evening.

CO's Competition

The CO's competition is a great opportunity for the Regiment to get together and to help install a competitive spirit amongst the soldiers. This year's competition was by no means won come the final event. Sp Sqn had a 5 point lead but with a further 10 points up for grabs it could have gone either way. The final event consisted of 5-a-side football, touch rugby, rounders and a gun run. Worryingly the Sqn was missing some key players and some of the gladiators that had been pinnacle all the way through the competition were now posted. This gave the newer members of the Sqn a chance to step up and carry on their good work.

We finished a disappointing 4th in the football, 3rd in

rounders, but won the touch rugby and came a respectable 2nd on the gun run, despite being a man down after a few hundred metres. This meant that it could still be taken from our grasp by one of the field Squadrons. With only the Tug of War event left the pressure was on. Each Squadron fielded strong teams with a broad spattering of experience and virgin pullers which certainly made it entertaining.

In the end it came down to a 3 way pull off between 217, 248 and Sp Sqn. 217 got a bye to the final which left all the work to be done again. 248 looked like they were feeling tired and fortunately could not hold their ground which only left 217 to beat. With it all to play for the team stepped up to the rope and after a couple of hard fought pulls won the Tug of War resulting in Sp Sqn winning the overall competition, and the bragging rights to match.



Sig Norton receiving the CO's trophy



30th SIGNAL REGIMENT BRAMCOTE



CO **Lt Col NM Stokoe OBE**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) K Dade**

Exercise REGAL SWAN – by Sig Rance

In March 2014 elements of 30 Signal Regiment embarked on a 10 day Adventurous Training (AT) exercise to the ski resort of Val Thorens in the French Alps. The aim was to develop skiing skills and work towards the SF1 and SF2 qualifications. It is safe to say the exercise didn't get off to the best of starts with the coach breaking down just 2 hours into the 24 hour journey. After a short delay, the coach was back on the road and it seemed like no time at all until the coach reached its destination. On the first day of skiing, the groups were sorted into a range of different abilities, which included 3 groups of complete beginners. Everyone was keen to get on the slopes, and since there were plenty of them and the highest was 3200m above sea level there were lots of interesting runs and exploring to do. After a long first day, everyone spent the rest of the evening getting some well deserved relaxation. Some sampled the night life that Val Thorens had to offer, but most were too tired to do anything except eat and sleep.

The next morning everyone woke to another sunny day and all were raring to go, except for one or two who had clearly forgotten to put on sun cream the previous day, resulting in blisters and looking as red as lobsters. Val Thorens had a lot to offer throughout the skiing exercise, with some of the best

routes and breathtaking views to offer. The third day of the exercise brought the first bit of drama when **Sig James Wilson** came off the track and flew over the edge, dropping roughly 10 metres and coming away shaken and with a slightly bruised pride. However, it wasn't long before **Sig Wilson** was back to his best after brushing himself off and he carried on skiing, to everyone's surprise. Thankfully, there were no more injuries throughout the rest of the exercise as everyone worked on building up their skills and gaining confidence in



A group photo on the slopes of Val Thorens



their ability. By the final day, everyone had improved significantly and earned their SF1 qualifications along the way. This trip was a fantastic experience and thanks must go to the organising team of **Lt Stu Dunster** and **SSgt Matt Fitton** who put a great deal of effort in weeks prior to the trip. Their work was worth it and the trip proved to be one of the best skiing expeditions the Regiment have organised.

244 SIGNAL SQUADRON (AIR SUPPORT)

OC **Maj J Snelgrove**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) D Seymour**

Exercise PASHTUN LINKS – by Sig N Hilditch

Sig Natalie Williams and I deployed on Ex PASHTUN LINKS 7 on 28 Feb 14, attached to 33 Engineer Regiment (EOD) in Jordan until the middle of April. The aim of this exercise is to enable the Engineers, attached arms and Infantry close protection to train to deploy on Op HERRICK 20. There are some 12 cap badges and several civilian contractors involved in this exercise with an expected 800 personnel deploying. Upon our arrival there was nothing here but tents and toilets, therefore we had to begin with helping to finish off the MOB itself. For the duration we lived off the tried, tested and trusted 24hr ration pack.

Once construction of the MOB was complete we retrieved our equipment and began our set-up phase. Our aim was to be set-up within a week, however due to an excellent working environment and everyone happy to help we achieved this in three days making the staff and COS **Maj Mayes** RE extremely happy. As we were set-up in quick time, this meant people who wanted to email back to the UK, use the intranet or just for simple tasks of printing etc could do so.



The incredible carved city of Petra is simply stunning

Where we were based in the desert was 1500m above sea level, which meant running and tabbing was a lot harder. After a few weeks, our bodies began to get used to the

altitude and running and tabbing became more manageable, as did the topping up of our sun tan. We also had days where **Sig Natalie Williams** or I could go into Aqaba city centre. We were about 2 hours from the centre where it was also 10 degrees hotter. **Sig Williams** managed to get on a trip to Petra (one of the 7 wonders of the world) which was paid for out of the exercise fund, which she enjoyed very much with many photos being taken.

During the exercise we went to visit the Jordanian Army Camp. We played football and Tug of War and ate the Jordanian traditional food (goat with rice) which we had to eat using our right hand. It was quite an eye opener, they were extremely friendly and it was nice to find out more about their culture.

Exercise CRIMSON EAGLE – by LCpl E Dickinson

After weeks of winding **Cpl Richie Cranswick** and the rest of the guys in the Troop up, it was finally time to start our long journey to sunny California and leave them behind in the miserable, wet UK. After 11 hours, 4 movies, 2 questionable meals and not much sleep, we eventually landed in San Diego ready to be met by **Maj Martin** AAC. We soon learnt the perks of being in the military in America when **Maj Martin** managed to get us straight through passport control and straight on the road to El Centro where our beds were definitely calling, only to be wide awake at 0200 the next morning!

As all our kit was in and working we then moved onto our secondary job as taxi driver! We weren't complaining as our first detail was to pick people up from San Diego Airport. As the flight wasn't actually landing until 1700 we saw this as an opportunity to leave early and visit the USS Midway Museum. The one thing I learned from visiting USS Midway was that I was pleased I had joined the Army and not the Navy. I just couldn't see myself living in such a confined space for a long period of time. Onboard USS Midway there was also a fantastic view of San Diego Bay and we came to realise the scale of the US Navy presence in San Diego.

Once the majority of the AAC arrived the main effort was to get all 6 Apaches task-worthy and ready to fly. The first flight was the Annual El Centro Air Show where the British Army had a chance to show off some of our own air assets. The El Centro Air Show was a good day out which was mainly centred around America's answer to the Red Arrows, The Blue Angels, who put on an amazing display. After seeing the display we decided we would let them off with the amount of times they had woken us up early in the morning practicing! When the Air Show was over **Maj Martin** stood us down for two days and we were given the opportunity to go wherever we wanted. The obvious choice was of course... Las Vegas! When we arrived in Las Vegas we were typical British tourists with cameras at the ready. It is an amazing place which so much to see and do, seeing 'The Strip' is quite an experience.



The Blue Angels, 2x F/A 18 Hornets flying in close formation



250 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj J Malcolm**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Sureshkumar Limbu**

Life continues at an incredibly fast pace here at 250 Gurkha Signal Squadron (GSS). The first quarter of 2014 has been extremely busy. The Squadron main focus has been Ex SWAN CONNECTION, GOC FTC visit and the Operational Shooting Camp preparation. The Troops moved into their new technical accommodation in order to accommodate 258 Signal Squadron as a new JTFHQ Sqn. **Capt Bharat Shrestha** recently led a Skiing AT to Germany and Ex JOINT WARRIOR personnel are returning to camp as we write.

The Ops team has been busy as ever but now we have a new Ops Officer, **Capt Matt Bennett** in the chair and **YofS Graham Wootton** has been extremely busy planning for Ex TRAILWALKER 14 in July. The Squadron also welcomed **2Lt Dan Tarbox** as OC Victor Troop to replace **Capt Bharat** and there have been a trickle of personnel posting in and out as we move to fulfil our A2020 establishment. Seven Signallers recently completed their PNCO course successfully and **Sgt Rajkumar Gurung** has been recently selected for promotion to SSgt. We look forward to some overseas exercises, more AT and winning the Nepal Cup and TRAILWALKER events before summer leave starts.

Exercise SWAN CONNECTION 2014 – by Sig Niraj Subba

Ex SWAN CONNECTION was 30 Signal Regiment's Collective Training 3 (CT 3) annual certification exercise held from 13 Jan - 7 Feb 14 on Catterick Training Area. The main aims for the exercise were to certify ICS capabilities by using Falcon, DII LD and Magpie and also rehearse the deployment of JRRF and other contingent elements within realistic and tactical scenarios.

Before the deployment, 250 GSS had conducted 2 weeks of IBDP and PACEX and lots of effort had been put in to it. Sqn Ops supervised closely and made sure that PACEX went well. The PACEX gave us good opportunity to test all of our equipment and make necessary adjustments to the actual plan before deploying on the exercise. As 250 GSS had already successfully conducted CT1 and CT2 exercises, we all knew what kind of standards the Regiment wants from 250 GSS.



Sig Rohan and Sig Sujun preparing to erect a Falcon radio antenna for the WASP Det

The exercise was conducted in two phases; the first week of exercise was a low level training week where back to basic drills were conducted. **2Lt Walker** also delivered an important lesson on how to extract orders and the key pieces of information that are needed from this process. Other lessons

that took place were on Bowman and the new Mantis capability. Two members from 2 Signal Regiment were also attached to AATF HQ to get experience on Falcon equipment and were very pleased at the end of exercise with the amount of training they had received.

On the second week our whole HQ were to move into the new location which was considered to be technically difficult to establish comms due to the complex geographical location. This was the time to prove for the AATF element that we could achieve where others couldn't. Under close supervision of OC X Ray Tp, **Capt Rupkumar Gurung**, AATF were successful in achieving its first priority link within 4 hrs and all services were in and working within 5 hours which was a record time. **Mr Jagadish Paudel**, QG SIGNALS Pundit visited the exercise location performing a 'Pooja' and subsequently staying overnight to meeting the Squadron personnel. During the last phase of the exercise Comd 1 Signal Brigade and CO 30 SR, **Lt Col NM Stokoe**, came to visit individual HQs and were very pleased to see the effort put in. Finally, on 7 Feb 14 the Squadron was successfully recovered from Catterick training area to Bramcote.



Capt Rup leads the worship with Pundit during his visit



SSgt (SQMS) Gyan briefing 1 Sig Bde Comd on G4 issues

256 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj J King**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) J McMahon**

Exercise SECOND RUN and Exercise JOINT WARRIOR

'One place change' OLRT to EEHQ1 – by Lt W Thorogood

During Ex SECOND RUN I was fortunate enough to step in as Alpha Troop OC and deploy EEHQ1 to RAF Halton while Lt



Symon Smith was away stepping in as commander of JTFHQ1. This came as a different challenge for me and gave me the opportunity to put into practice the skills learnt during my Troop Commanders Course. As Bravo Troop OC the opportunity to deploy as a full Troop out on exercise is minimal as the role involves personnel deploying at short notice in small two man teams supporting Operation Liaison Reconnaissance Teams from PJHQ.

With the PACEX complete the preceding week, the packet was lined up and ready to deploy in the early hours of Monday morning. It was a much different sight compared to the 1 or 2 Hilux vehicles that I have come accustomed to deploying as Bravo Troop OC. After the packet arrived at RAF Halton, Alpha Troop had 24hrs to reach FOC to confirm that they were able to continue to be held at high readiness.

Under the effective control and direction of the complex Cpl (**Cpl Sam Potts**) the infrastructure was established with power within eight hours. The Troop moved on with the task of establishing communications and reaching FOC within 24hrs. With the challenge set by the Squadron OC to see if we could beat the 24hr timeline the Troop worked throughout the night. Being kept on track by **Sgt Williams'** motivational pep talks, the Troop reached FOC in the early hours beating the challenge set by the Sqn OC reaching FOC in 13 hours.

'One place change' EEHQ1 to JTFHQ1 – by Lt Symon Smith

On 24 Feb 14 just a week after the Regimental exercise, Charlie Troop deployed out to RAF Halton to support one of the main JTFHQ exercises of the year, Ex SECOND RUN and Ex JOINT WARRIOR. This spans 9 weeks in total from PACEX to ENDEX or 'end of phase' as I kept getting reminded of by the JTFHQ core staff. Once the setup was complete, ready for Ex SECOND RUN, Charlie Troop OC (**Lt Laurence Brind**) found a marvellous excuse to disappear for the week. To that end he had to handover control to the more capable and strikingly handsome **Lt Symon Smith** for the week. I am usually the EEHQ Troop Commander, in charge of a headquarters that supports up to 25 staff officers and only has two tents, which is in striking contrast to the JTFHQ Troop. After being integrated into 2 previous JTFHQ exercises I felt content with the task for the week. Ex SECOND RUN is, in principle, JTFHQ's PACEX for Ex JOINT WARRIOR.

I spent the first few days familiarising myself with the tent lay down and the CIS being provided before the influx of staff. 258 Sig Sqn also assisted by providing **SSgt Bufton** who worked with **SSgt Young** handling the Troop administration and **Lt David Lenehan** who stood in as an Ops O role. The highlight of the exercise was **SSgt Bufton's** resounding



JTFHQ

knowledge of fire safety and **SSgt Jennings'** cool calm management of the Magpie crew who pride themselves in the straightest of straight lines on their network diagrams.

On completion of the exercise it was time for control to be handed back to **Lt Brind**. Overall it was a successful exercise that was good preparation for Ex JOINT WARRIOR in March.

Special thanks must go to RAF HALTON for being very hospitable for the duration of both exercises. This included turning some of their facilities from normal working hours to 24hrs to accommodate the shift system in place for the Troop.

258 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj L Kelly**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) S Watson**

258 Signal Squadron is now fully in the swing of its re-subordination to 30 Signal Regiment. Within its first month of being re-roled, the Squadron deployed to Catterick Training Area for a CT3 level exercise; Ex SWAN CONNECTION. This was just what the Squadron needed to shake them out into their new structure.

We have also had an equipment capability week to prepare us for our forthcoming Troop and Squadron level exercises this summer. Whilst this is ongoing, we are also planning a hill walking expedition to Hadrian's Wall and a Sailing expedition to Greece. We bid farewell to **Capt Casey Hill** and welcome her replacement, **2Lt Jo Willden**.

1 Sig Bde Boxing Night – by LCpl Jason Kolmer

30 Signal Regiment Boxing Team 2014 comprised of **Sgt Al Mousley** (Head coach), **Sig Michael Blackburn** (coach), **LCpl Liz Blackburn**, **LCpl Ben Gilbert**, **LCpl Jason Kolmer**, **LCpl Demi Graham**, **Sig Steven Edgar**, **LCpl Dan Day**, **Sig George Sprigg** and **Sig Stu Ashman**.

Training began mid Jan and needless to say we were pushed to our limits! Two of the team were 300 Club members and two had recently been upgraded so the levels of fitness were varied. Regardless of this, each member of the team was pushed to their limit: whether that is a personal best in one of **Sgt Al Mousley's** infamous speed sessions or lasting the rounds with civilian sparring partners.

It was instilled at the very beginning that perfect technique was the key. This meant endless hours of drills and sparring under the watchful eye of **Sgt Al Mousley**, a former Army boxer and long time Army boxing coach himself. Towards the showdown with the ARRC Sp Bn we were feeling confident with ourselves knowing that each of us could do more than just brawl in a ring and hope that our fitness would pull us through.

With the weigh-ins completed the night before, the day of the contest arrived. There was a nervous energy building in the team dressing room as the minutes ticked by. Then with the call from an official it was time.

Sig George Sprigg was first up at welterweight and unfortunately was stopped in the first round with a vicious right hook. He had dominated the fight up until that point and was easily ahead. However, one punch can change the course of a fight and on this occasion it did. **LCpl Demi Graham** was up next for a female welterweight bout. Clearly the more skilful boxer, there was uproar when the result went the wrong way for 30 Signal Regiment. From an objective point of view many were baffled by it. **LCpl Dan Day** was next to fight in a light middleweight bout. Again, a decision that incorrectly went the other way. There was



complete silence when the winner was announced as the other fighter.

Sig Steven Edgar was the penultimate fighter at heavyweight. Knowing a victory was needed, he scored a TKO within a minute. Finally, **Sig Stu Ashman** fought at super heavyweight. ARCC Sp Bn was unable to provide a super heavyweight fighter so this was a walkover for 30 Signal Regiment. However not to disappoint the crowd in attendance an exhibition bout was presented between **Sig Stu Ashman** and one of his team mates.

Back in the dressing room after the bouts there were a whole range of emotions from disappointment to elation, but everyone who boxed had every right to feel proud of themselves as it is something that only a handful of people can do. Due to unforeseen and regrettable circumstances the fight between 30 Signal Regiment and 2 Signal Regiment was called off, meaning the boxing team only had one fight. The team is hopeful that some of its members will participate at the Army individuals at the end of the year. The entire team became a tight knit family due to the amount of time we spent together. It was a fantastic experience and helped each individual not only with their fitness but also their personal development and I would recommend it to anyone.



Sgt Al Mousley giving some words of inspiration during Bde boxing night

Exercise SWAN CONNECTION 14 – by Sig Ben Aprea

Early on a cold Monday morning, when most other people were asleep, E Troop formed up, along with the rest of the Squadron at the armoury to get out weapons and begin Ex SWAN CONNECTION 14. Once the weapons and crypto had been collected E Troop watched a long convoy of Land Rovers and other green fleet trickle out of the front gate, while we turned up the radios and heaters in our Hiluxes. After a long drive to the exercise area we arrived at our HQ locations and tried to set up the equipment, not realising how temperamental it was. Many hours went by as we tried everything to get comms in, but since it was all new kit and none of us knew what was wrong, we eventually went up to Gandale Farm to receive training from 256 Signal Squadron.

The next few days were spent doing recce reports, spot mapping and learning to use the equipment. We found out that we had been doing the right drills on the Dial Up JOCs, but sometimes it is just difficult to operate. After six days of lessons we broke down into our OLRT teams and **Lt Stu Dunster** sent us to different places on the exercise area to conduct a recce and make a recce report. Being left to do our job and not having someone looking over our shoulder was the best bit, and we really enjoyed it. We got back to Wathgill Camp and gave our reports in to be assessed and had a debrief.

Towards the end of the two weeks **Sig Stephen Knill-Jones** gave us a lesson about finding faults on the routers, and we set up an Ops Room for the Brigade Commander's visit. It all went well, and the CO was very happy with what he saw. Once the Brigadier left, it was ENDEX and we all packed up our Hiluxes and began the journey back to camp. Overall, everyone got a lot out of the exercise and we all learnt that sometimes you just have to keep persevering with the equipment to get it working and that if you want to impress a staff officer, give him a brew when he gets in.



Sig Knill-Jones conducting a lesson on 117F

SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj G Greaves**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) J Womble**

Life in Support Squadron rolls forward with our many Troops and Departments supporting Regimental commitments and exercises. A number of our soldiers are deployed worldwide – **Sig Scott Martin** is enjoying the Falkland Islands experience, **LCpl Reece Williamson** is deployed in Afghanistan whilst **SSgt Ritchie Widdison** and **Sgt Paul Golf** are currently fighting the war on terror in the equally sunny climbs of Tampa Bay, Florida.

The OC, **Maj Gaz Greaves**, has decided that one job is not enough and is double hatting as QM(A) which is keeping him busy. **Capt Dougie Icke** is soon to hand over the Unit Welfare Officer job leaving him to his other role as Squadron 2IC. The new Unit Welfare Office will be **Capt Al Fraser** who is moving south a couple of M6 junctions from Stafford. **WO2 (SSM) Jim Womble** has started the resettlement process and with a smile on his face has passed control and responsibility for the next Bramcote Station Open Day to our ever-busy **SSgt (SQMS) Matt Burns**. Recently **WO2 (RQMS) Scott Tomblin** has left us to a job in Media Ops (Army) at Army HQ and has been replaced by **WO2 (RQMS) Paul McDougall**. We have also said farewell to **Padre David Vince** who is replaced by **Padre Dave Adams**. Finally a mention for our new AGC Chief Clerk, **Sgt Martin Ngando**, who has hit the ground running



since his recent arrival. Whilst he is already adding real value and professionalism in the HR arena, the 2IC Squadron has had to remind him where the kettle lives.

PNCO 16 – 28 Feb 14 – by WO2 A Naylor

As a distributed licence holder, 30 Signal Regiment's Training Wing conducted a PNCO course over the period 16 – 28 Feb 14, with the main aim of the course being to develop selected JNCOs for their upcoming roles and responsibilities. This 2 week pan-Army delivered course encompasses all the command, leadership and management skills potential JNCOs will need in their future careers in both barracks and the field.

Although the course started with 38 personnel on the first day, after the risk reduction 8 miler only 34 personnel were deemed suitable to continue. This basic mandatory physical test identifies soldiers who are not up to the required standard and therefore would be an unacceptable risk during the physical aspects of the course. The remaining soldiers were then divided into 3 sections where they would remain for the duration of the course. Each section was allocated 2 directing staff (DS) allowing for a much better student to instructor ratio.

The first week's classroom based lessons are all about building the foundations of the command, leadership and management skills applicants will need as a JNCO. Although the course is pass/ fail, this first week looks to enhance the qualities applicants have shown to be selected for promotion. Not only cerebral, the 2 demanding physical leadership development PT sessions pitted each section against each other and provided an excellent vehicle to assess physical and mental resolve. The week finished with a practical reminder of the individual and section skills each applicant needed to show during the Basic Close Combat Skills (BCCS) phase in the second week. Each of these demonstrations were initially undertaken by the permanent DS, allowing the applicants to see the practical application of the knowledge revised in the first week and the level of commitment needed to succeed.

So into the field for the final week, the PNCO candidates deployed onto Ex BATTLE STRIPE on Swynnerton Training Area. The look of trepidation as the applicants disembarked from the coach quickly faded as the section DS took over and moved the course into what was going to become their platoon harbour for the week. As it had been raining over the weekend the shovels quickly got stuck into the mud to dig out each pair's foxhole. As the course only assesses applicants at the Section 2IC level, each section's DS took on the role of section commander for the round-robin of section attacks



PNCO candidates busy themselves digging shell scrapes during the works phase

which would be used to assess each applicants command appointment. The aim of the BCCS phase is simple - to test the ability to command and control a fire team.

The four days in the field seemed to have taken everything out of the soldiers as the coach journey back to camp was extremely quiet. The mood was soon raised after the exercise kit had been handed back and weapons cleaned. The course finished with an informal Gurkha curry where the Adjutant and RSM congratulated the course on their achievements and gave some words of wisdom for the future, following which was a chance for the course to let their hair down with some funny skits on the DS.

After the dinner it was time to award the two prestigious awards of Top Student and Top Field Soldier. **Sig Nathan Jones** was awarded Overall Top Student for the course with **LCpl Sul Pun** walking away with the Top Field Soldier award.

All that remained was for the DS to give final interviews and feedback to each soldier. The worried faces were not wholly necessary as the vast proportion of the course had succeeded in their quest to become substantive Lance Corporals.



Final checks and briefing in the harbour area prior to patrol

Training Wing Hang Gliding and Paragliding – by Capt J Harryman

On Sun 2 Mar 14 the members of 30 Signal Regiment Training Wing deployed to the Joint Services Hang Gliding & Paragliding Centre in Crickhowell. On arrival we were given a brief on what to expect and what was expected of us for the week ahead. The centre itself has excellent amenities ranging from wifi to an excellent Sky TV package; they also have table-tennis, which afforded **WO2 Andy Naylor** some much needed practice.

On the first day of training we were given safety briefs and also shown the gliders and equipment that we would be using for the week. In the afternoon we were taken out and shown how to check the wind direction and speed, allowing us to get the gliders into the air for a bit of ground handling. Ground handling is akin to flying a huge kite that has the ability to pull you into the air; however by the end of the first day the whole course were competent flyers.

The morning of day two consisted of more ground handling to which the group were all becoming very confident. With the wind on our side the instructors decided to take us to another area for the afternoon so that we could try and get a little air time off a short slope. **Cpl Kishan Ale** got his glider into the air and instead of going forward he got a rush of wind into his glider which propelled him backwards and onto



the road, without any injuries though he got up and carried on. The OC Training Wing **Capt James Harryman** quickly got to grasps with the flying due to his kite-surfing experience, however with the wind picking up to beyond safe levels the day's training was suspended.

The third day was the most exciting, the weather was good and with all of the previous two days training the instructors thought we were all ready to get some flight time. We were taken to a small slope which rose from around 30ft up to 100ft. Once there in our teams of two we were coached into take off. Once we had completed a set amount of flights from the lower levels we were able to move further up the slope and gain some height with our flights. **LCpl Andy Harker** was the first to the highest point that we were allowed to fly from followed by **Sgt Ritchie Allen**. It should be mentioned that **Sgt Allen** is petrified of heights but he overcame this and enjoyed getting his flights in. With the good weather, each member of the course passed their 14 qualifying flights and passed the practical side of the course.

The fourth day of the course came and due to the weather being abysmal it was decided to undertake the theory part of the course which ended in an exam. The entire course passed qualifying us all as Elementary Pilots and we all agreed this was some of the most rewarding AT we had undertaken. On the way home **Sgt Allan** inquired that as we were now qualified pilots; did we get any wings for our uniform?



WO2 Andy Naylor preparing to get airborne!

Exercise WELSH EPIC 2014 – by WO1 (RSM) Dade

Established Cyclist Week. On 9 Mar 14 **Cpl Richie Calladine** and **Sig Matt Thorpe**, both road cycling instructors, departed for Capel Curig to unleash 30 Signal Regiment hell on the Army Cycling Union masters of the road; **Cpl Calladine** instructing on this week and the novice week to follow. Both held their own and got in some serious mileage, with **Sig Thorpe** flexing his 'cycling not running' muscles for all to see. Feedback to the novice riders via instructors was of excellent weather and amazing views - we were in for quite a shock.

Novice Week. As the first week closed with some awesome tales of the road, week 2 began. This week was added to the program due to the overwhelming interest by novice riders for week 1. The weather was kind on departure from Bramcote as members of Support Squadron departed to take part in Ex WELSH EPIC which was the annual Army Cycling Union training camp at Capel Curig.



Riders of Ex WELSH EPIC 2014 line up for a group photograph

The turnout from Support Squadron saw seasoned cyclists such as **Cpl Richie Calladine** (instructing the novice group which included some pure novice "Roadies" and **SSgt Tony Ingoe**, with **SSgt (Fofs) Fox** setting the pace and group leading the "Fat Wheelers" mountain biking. Right from the off, the three instructors were flying the Corps Colours both in ability and outfits, leaving other Corps in their wake. The road week started with a shake out ride (if you can shake out with a 6.5 mile uphill climb straight out of Capel Curig's gates). Excellent instruction on group riding, the importance of feeding and hydrating on the move were given prior to departure otherwise you will end up "bonking" - great advice as many fell foul of this error in admin.

The weather was on our side which was surprising for north Wales. During the week the rides got gradually longer and harder, with the weather on the long ride day (80 to 100 miles) really showing us what the Welsh mountains could deliver. Thanks must go to **Cpl Calladine** for all the pre-training rides he and **SSgt Ingoe** ran prior to taking part in the exercise; the shock of capture would have been unbelievable without this training. Special mention must go to **Sgt Mark Barclay** for his downhill multi-tasking. Whilst he did end up crashing within 10 miles, he impressed with his strength of character to crack on for another 90 miles!

On reflection, many lessons were learnt: don't wrap up with everything you own (even if the weather is horrendous – RSM), drinking whilst doing over 30mph downhill creates road rash and the Midlands does not prepare you for the likes of Pen Y Pass and Nebo. Great friendships were established across the board and everyone is now looking forward to Ex WELSH EPIC 2015. Thanks to **SSgt Geordie Watson** of 15 Signal Regiment for delivering an awesome week of training, see you next year!



Riders of Ex WELSH EPIC out on the road





32nd SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) GLASGOW



CO Lt Col J Knight MBE
RSM WO1 (RSM) W King

Exercise MERCURY SNOWRIDER – Top Reservist Team

32 Signal Regiment deployed a team of 3 to this years Ex MERCURY SNOW RIDER, a 2 week long snowboarding exercise set in the small resort of Rauris, Austria with around 150 people from across the Corps attending.

The first week comprised of instruction from a team of instructors from the Netherlands, known as Ripstar. All of the team members were relatively new to snowboarding and this was the first time snowboarding on a mountain as opposed to an indoor slope so it was a bit of a steep learning curve. However the weather was glorious, with the sun shining down heavily, the temperature around 5 degrees and plenty of fresh snow, the conditions couldn't have been better.

By the end of the first week, everyone had improved their skills, learnt new techniques and a few tricks along the way. The week ended in a fancy dress party to thank the instructors for their help and more than few beers for everyone. The second week focused on putting the skills learnt during the training to good use in border cross, slalom and slope style events. These events were fast paced and there were more than few spectacular crashes throughout!

The border cross event was a race through a series of turns, small jumps (kickers) and small repeated hills (rollers). The first run through was a time trial, followed by a knockout event where 4 riders would ride the course simultaneously. The slope style was a small course where the aim was to get through the course while performing jumps and other snowboard tricks, with points being awarded for style and complexity.

The slalom was fairly standard, with competitors having to manoeuvre round flags, firstly in a time trial qualification, then in a race against another rider. Once all the racing was complete, there was a free day on the Friday for a chance for more snowboarding and some personal development. This was followed by the prize giving, where the team received the prize for the Top Reservist Team. All in all, the team had a very enjoyable time and are keen to compete next year to see if they can improve on their results from this year.



Sgt Less presented with trophy for Best Reservist Team

40 (NORTH IRISH HORSE) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC Maj G Stevenson
SSM WO2 (SSM) G Campbell

Pastie's Fun Troop Day

Sat 15 Mar started off with a little bit of hard work cleaning weapons in Palace Barracks. Luckily enough they weren't extremely dirty or we would have been down there all day. A few hours later and they were gleaming. The next stop was Clonaver Barracks for some 'round robin admin', well that's what most of the troops thought. They soon had a shock to the system when they heard they were spending an hour or so in the garages doing some Det maintenance. **Sgt Kris Wilson** had been working hard and was very organised and detailed with his briefing, the troops soon got to work and managed to complete most of the tasks in a short period of time. The smiles started returning after the hard work was completed.

We then moved indoors to start **SSgt 'Pastie' Palmer's** Admin Adventure around the unit, involving G4, MATTS, admin with the Clerks, courses and much more. This 'Admin Adventure' proved to be a big thumbs up, many people squared away their long overdue DII and JPA issues, were able to book onto courses or even find out certain courses were available to enhance their career within the Reserves. Not only were we able to go on an adventure, the JNCOs were also able 'chest poke' the SNCOs about how the Troop is being run and how things are done within the Troop. This also proved to be beneficial as the JNCOs were able to let go of all the issues at once and have them answered or at least given a solution. 1 hour 30 minutes later it was proven that **LCpl Rory Mortimer** and **Sig Johnathan Phillips** had all the questions and didn't know when it was time to stop talking.

After a long day of admin, Det maintenance and getting our hands dirty cleaning weapons the troops were feeling slightly drained and ready for the a curry. **LCpl Flo Conlane** served up a delicious wholesome meal, followed by a few social beers in the bar.

Sun 16 Mar, the day that the troops had waited patiently and worked extremely hard for the previous day, had finally arrived. Before heading to the paintball field and race track we all headed to the swimming pool. **LCpl Mellissa Owen**



didn't know how to keep her balance around half naked men and went wobbly at the knees which resulted in her falling in the pool without being instructed to. **Sig Lorna McSorley** and **SSgt Ricky George** may have added to her fall... we will never know the truth. It was like being at a swimming gala, four people at a time swam like fish to be the winner however, **Sig Johnathan Phillips** thought he was out for a doggy paddle on a Sunday morning. **Sgt Kris Wilson** (a fire fighter) thought he was on duty and decided to hose people from the side. Safe to say if anyone peed in the pool you wouldn't feel it as the hose water was like ice water.

Next stop was Eddie Irvines for a fun afternoon paintballing and Go-karting. 40 Sig Sqn left the barracks in Northern Irish style, with a red, white and blue minibus convoy. The afternoon started off paintballing; we were divided into two teams and sent into the 'war zone.' Both teams attempted team tactics, pair's fire and manoeuvre, covering fire etc, whilst being defensive and offensive. Three individuals foolishly volunteered for one of the games. They ended up being our target; each individual had the opportunity to shoot one of the three of them. **Lt Dan Cognolato** kindly stepped up and took the position off **Sig Emily Thompson** who ran while she could. It was evident that a few people weren't going to stand individually and shoot the volunteers but go in crowds and fire more than one round. The last game was 'suicide', everyone fought for themselves. **Sig Robert Browne** was injured and thought he had his hand blown off rolling on the floor. **Cpl 'Dutch' Holland** 'medic for the day' rescued him; hand is still in one piece just a few scars. It was obvious who was not very tactical throughout the afternoon by the amount of bruises individuals had.

Next stop was Go Karting; we were divided into teams of three. Everyone started to find the 'best rally drivers', we all teamed up and moved on for briefing and to get changed. Everyone tried to grab the perfect size of overalls however they were all 'one size'. One size fits all didn't work for **LCpl Jonny Gillen**, as the overall just about reached his knees. **Lt Dan Cognolato** lived up to his officer rank by pulling into the pit when his number was called in as a joke by **LCpl Rory Mortimer** and **Cpl Holland**. They were just jealous because they weren't winning, sore losers. Although **Lt Cognolato** wasn't impressed when he pulled in to find no one to take his place. 1st, 2nd and 3rd places were celebrated on the stand and they received trophies.

Overall it was a very well organised, informative and fun weekend. The entire troop would like to convey their appreciation to **SSgt 'Pastie' Palmer** for one of the best training weekends they have had.

50 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj B Hogg**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) D Ross**

Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant's Certificates

On Tuesday 25 February 2014 three members of 50 Signal Squadron were invited to attend Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant's (HMLL) Ceremony at 102 Battalion REME, Newton Aycliffe AR centre. **SSgt Dave Riches**, **LCpl Pamela Baxter** and **Mr Geoff Rowling** the Squadron Civilian fitter were awarded HMLL Certificates for Loyal and Meritorious Service.

The Certificates were presented by HMLL of County Durham, **Sue Snowdon**, who also presented a wide range of awards to various individuals from across County Durham. Following the awards ceremony all attending had the chance to "attack" the gargantuan buffet and mingle with their guests along with the dignitaries.

The evening was a resounding success and a good night was had by all, even the drill went according to plan! All members of 50 Squadron would like to extend their congratulations to the above on this notable achievement.

Squadron Open Night

On Tuesday 11 March 50 Signal Squadron hosted an open evening at Darlington ARC as part of Army Careers Centre Middlesbrough's spring recruiting campaign. Individuals who had shown an interest in the Reserves were invited in to meet serving members and get a feel for what the Signals Reserves has to offer. Eight brave souls ventured into the Drill Hall at the start of the evening, probably for the free coffee and biscuits!, and after an opening brief started to walk around several stands set up to show off skills and equipment gained and used by members of the Squadron ably led by **LCpl 'follow me' Baxter**.

Starting with a Field Kitchen set up by **Pte 'Burns' Smith** the Sqn Chef, then moving onto a field craft stand run by **LCpl 'Wild man of the woods' Walton** they were then presented with an Adventure Training brief from **Sgt Sweeney** who offered them a glimpse of all the biking and snowboarding adventures they could get on.

CBRN was covered by **LCpl Anderson** and Battlefield First Aid by **SSgt Fletcher**. Events in the Drill Hall were wrapped up with the weapons display, **Cpl Andy Williams** of 204 Signal Sqn helping us out with enough firearms to start off a small campaign!

Our answer to "Laurel and Hardy", **LCpls Twist** and **Hardman** showed off their considerable Bowman skills by presenting a Det (the stamp they wrote their knowledge down on has since been used by the Sqn Clerk) and the tour ended at the Gym, where **LCpl Walton** our PTI Showed off the various torture devices they can get paid to use.

Suitably impressed 3 of the visitors signed up on the night, and 4 of the others since. The evening rounded off in the bar, after a fight with the "pop up" tent from the AT stand, which took a nano second to deploy and a fire teams worth of Troops 20 Minutes to put away! The Squadron would like to thank all of the above as well as those members who came in and helped out making it the success it was.

51 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Penny Mell**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) D Mackenzie**

Squadron Adventure Training – Exercise NORTHERN ADVENTURE II - 17 – 19 January 2014 Rothiemurchas Lodge

The Squadron convened at Rothiemurchas Lodge near Aviemore on the evening of Friday 17 January to partake in some Adventure Training, but the highlight of the weekend was set to be the Burns Supper on the Saturday night.

The Squadron was split into groups going on ability with **SSgt Forbes**, **WO2 Henderson** and **Cpl Williams** taking the lead. **SSgt Forbes'** group consisted of those looking to make the Lanyard Trophy team and big things were expected of them. Needless to say, they achieved all set out for them even if it meant getting to the top of the hills on their knees in a white out. **WO2 Henderson's** group undertook low level navigation around the Larigrew and Rothiemurchas Lodge whilst **Cpl Williams'** group headed out and down towards Aviemore stopping for refreshments when required.

Chefs for the weekend were **Cpl Holmes**, **Cpl McCormack** and **Pte Porter** from 52 Support Squadron and they certainly



pulled all the stops out to produce an excellent Burns Supper for the weary walkers.

SSgt MacKenzie had taken his pipes with him to “Pipe in the Haggis” ably assisted by **Pte Porter** carrying said Haggis, **Sig Dodds** recited the poem “Pretty Peg” which he had downloaded to his phone but it was difficult to read when someone who shall remain nameless called him and he lost his reading screen. The Immortal Memory was read by **Cpl MacDonald** with the actual address to the Haggis being done by **SSgt Forbes**. Those close to him had to “duck” a few times as he yielded the sword with an abundance of vigour around his head.

There was additional entertainment from the Glasgow and Tayside UOTC with their pipes and drums, and at the end of the meal all the musicians got together to play a wee medley just to finish off what had been a lovely meal/evening with friends.



SSgt Mackenzie piping in the haggis

Exercise NORTHERN FROLIC – by Sgt V Nursimiloo

On Friday 31 January, Squadron personnel commenced Ex NORTHERN FROLIC, one of a number of communications training weekends held throughout the training year.

After pre-deployment preparations on Friday evening, the Squadron deployed both CST and Bowman detachments into field locations. The training package was designed to be flexible and ensured that both junior operators and established det commanders benefited. The training package covered a range of topics from det loading and deployment through to det closedown and maintenance.

For most of Saturday the weather was cold and wet. However, everybody got on with the training and made the best of the rather excellent G4 support. **SSgt McGinlay** and her team ensured that there was a steady supply of hot food and drinks throughout the day to help sustain morale. The doughnuts were particularly popular at lunch!

On return to East Kilbride ARC, evening entertainment consisted of a “pamper night” for those that felt they needed

it or a warm beer in the bar for those that felt they needed that more. After a night of relaxation, everybody was ready to start training again on Sunday morning. This included a presentation from SaBRE. Given the many changes taking place at the moment, this presentation was both timely and welcomed, with a great deal of time given over to Q&A at the end of the presentation.



Route planning prior to the move

Presentations – Sunday 6 April

During our latest MATTS training weekend, there was a welcome opportunity to present members of the Squadron with course certificates and awards. Both **Sig Bird** (tipped as the Squadron’s next drill instructor) and **LCpl Mackie** (now taking drill tips from **Sig Bird**) have successfully completed their DITS course and **Sgt Barrie** received his Lord Lieutenant’s Certificate.

The weekend also presented the Squadron with the opportunity to dine out **WO2 Tochel**. Having served 15 years with Squadron, he now moves to a new role within RHQ and whilst we will miss him, we wish him all the very best with his new role. His successor, recently promoted **WO2 MacKenzie**, took no time in getting to grips with the parade format, showing all those there how it’s really done!



Sig Bird receives certificate





37th SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) REDDITCH



CO **Lt Col Cairns TD**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) Moore**

drafted in from their civilian jobs in order to help out and support the relief effort.

Support to Op PITCHPOLE (flooding) has dominated a large part of this period, with 12 members of the Regiment mobilising on HRR contracts to provide comms support to the relief effort. The Regiment deployed to Nescliffe Training Area in Feb for a Comms Exercise (in the rain and mud) and conducted another Bde level Trade Camp during the period. On 10 March 14 the Regiment received the Freedom of Redditch from the Mayor and this will be followed up with a Parade through the town on Sat 28 Jun 14. Congratulations from the CO go to 54 Sp Sqn for winning the CO's prize for best overall Squadron, as well as individual awards for best contribution (**Cpl Taylor**) and the Poulter's Plate (**Sig Roland**) going to Support Squadron personnel. The Regiment welcomes **Capt Sandi Hennis** on leaving the Regular Army and wishes those deploying on Herrick 20 with 1(UK) ADSR a safe tour.

37 Signal Regiment awarded the Freedom of Redditch

On Mon 10 March 14 the Regiment was awarded the Freedom Scroll by the Mayor of Redditch, **Councilor Wanda King**, and this will be followed by a Freedom Parade on Sat 28 June 14.

The Commanding Officer, **Lt Col Dominique Cairns TD**, said: "We have developed strong links with Redditch and it is an honour to formalise them further with the award of the Freedom of the Town. Our Reserve Royal Signals Headquarters and Support Squadron is one of only four across the UK and we rely heavily on our personnel from the area to support our activities. We look forward to building even stronger links during the coming years and working closely with the people of Redditch; many of whom are currently serving with the Regiment".



Cpl Taylor mobilised on HRR to support Op PITCHPOLE



Lt Col D S Cairns TD receiving the Freedom of Redditch

The event was supported by the Hon Col, **Maj Gen J Crackett TD**, 2 Sig Gp Comd, **Col S G Hutchinson MBE**, members of Redditch council and the Regiment.

OP PITCHPOLE - by Cpl Taylor (Sp Sqn)

37 Sig Regt was one of many units stood up for flood relief efforts across Feb and Mar 14, under the banner OP PITCHPOLE. The High Readiness Reserve (HRR) concept was put to the test as a contingent from the Regiment were

Members of all four Squadrons were dispatched to a number of flood hit areas across the country. The soldiers installed and maintained communications links, VTCs and DII terminals in emergency Gold and Silver command centres in a number of police and civil headquarters.

Capt Dave Dewfall, who led the task, said "I was astounded at how many of our soldiers were willing to rearrange plans and make sacrifices at short notice in order to help their fellow countrymen at their time of need." Many of the soldiers were moved to tears after hearing his words!

The Reservists have now all returned to their civilian occupations, with a little extra life experience and the dilemma of how to spend their call-out gratuity.

Poulter's Prize

On Sat 22 Mar 14 the past Master and Mistress Poulter (**Mr and Mrs Hervey Peebles**) visited 37 Sig Regt as they conducted their Mandatory Annual Training Tests (MATTs) at Swynnerton Training Area in Staffordshire. This was an excellent opportunity to visit training, catch up with the Regiment and award the Poulter's Plate prize for the most outstanding junior soldier from the unit.

The past Master and Mistress managed to visit a variety of training activities including map reading, first aid, live firing on



the range, CBRN drills and army values and standards presentation. The day proved to be “eye-opening; a rewarding and valuable insight into the training Reserve soldiers experience” and the past Mistress even had an opportunity to improve her Marksmanship skills aided by **WO1(RSM) Moore**. The visit culminated with the Past Master awarding the Poulter’s Plate to **Sig Roland** from 54 Support Squadron who is not only an excellent soldier, but a fit and able sportsman who has also been selected to play for the Army Reserve Football team, an outstanding achievement.



Sig Roland receiving the Poulter’s Plate

37 Signal Regiment have an excellent relationship with the Worshipful Company of Poulters and value their support and commitment to this Reserve unit. Their assistance has made an important and direct improvement to the wider training opportunities of junior Reserve soldiers most particularly in Adventure Training, developing their leadership, teamwork and fitness; improving their ability to operate in arduous conditions on Operations.

36 (EASTERN) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj K Humphries**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) WO2 K Elliott**

A busy period for the Sqn with the end of the training year and in preparation for the move under FR2020 from 37 Signal Regiment to 71 (City of London) Yeomanry Signal Regiment from 1 April 2014. 854 Tp under the command of **Capt Sherchan** closed in early January 2014 with all the members of the Troop being found other positions within the Army Reserve in the Cambridge Area. Although the Squadron has lost the Troop at Cambridge, it gains a Troop at Chelmsford and is renamed 36 (Essex Yeomanry) Signal Squadron from 1 April 2014. Everyone in the Squadron is looking forward to the challenges the new Squadron and Regiment will bring, though it is sad to say goodbye to 37 Signal Regiment, which welcomed everyone so warmly under the previous changes in 2009.

The Squadron is sad to see that **SSgt Jack Backhouse** has moved with his family from Colchester to Birmingham and thanked for all his hard work and wish him the best of luck. We welcome **SSgt Simon Copper** in his place from Birmingham. Welcome to **Sig Fox** who has recently joined the Squadron on completion of his TSC(A) and (B).

48 (CITY OF BIRMINGHAM) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj S Cherry**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Potts**

As training year 13/14 closes we look forward to the challenges of the next and do so with some fresh ideas and views from new Sqn members. Welcome to **Capt Sandi Hennis** who is already making her mark in the Ops Room, joining us directly from regular service; her experience is sure to be put to good use. **Capt Lucy Sewell** has moved from 53 Sig Sqn to take on the mantle of 2IC and has already added her enthusiasm and fresh ideas into next years' training programme.

Welcome also to **SSgt Jack Backhouse** from 36 Sig Sqn, making a smooth transition from TOWIE to Benefit Street, whilst we lose **SSgt ‘Coops’ Cooper**, moving in the opposite direction, only time will tell who will emerge the winner in this transaction! Congratulations are due to **LCpl Karen Butler** on the birth of **Sebastian**, at this rate we will have to find a bigger venue for this year’s Kids Christmas Party!

Op PITCHPOLE has now closed for business and all deployed HRR personnel returned safely to their civilian employers. Several tranches of personnel deployed in support of flood relief operations across the south of England in various roles, further strengthening the experiences of personnel in the Sqn and highlighting the importance of the HRR volunteering process. The next period will see **LCpls Bailey** and **Marston-Rydings** mobilise for deployment with 1(UK) ADSR on Op HERRICK 20; good luck to both and we look forward to your safe return in the New Year!

The recruiting effort continues apace and the Sqn is already swelling in numbers due to the efforts of **LCpl Jen Willets** in Birmingham and **Cpl Dave Shaw** in Coventry; whilst **Cpls Ash Jordan** and **Jenny Postlethwaite** mentor and prepare recruits through Phase 1 training. We look set to make great gains in the near future as our recruited strength climbs steadily.



Potential Recruits being introduced to Bowman

On a sporting front **Capt Anna Reed** has recently returned from a Ski-Touring challenge, and congratulations go to **Sgt Zoe Trimm** who not only led the Regimental team to Exercise MERCURY SNOWRIDER, but was also selected to represent the Army on the rugby field – Well Done.



53 (WALES & WESTERN) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj G Smith**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Cash**

OC Handover

The training programme was adjusted slightly on the evening of Tue 28 Jan 14 to facilitate the official handover of command of 53 (W&W) Sig Sqn. **Maj Graeme Smith** assumed command vice **Maj Matt Longcake** after almost 4 years at the helm. The evening started with an address from **Maj Smith** outlining his vision and stating that he would try to build on the good work done by **Maj Longcake**. **Maj Longcake** was then presented with a brass Miner's Lamp as tradition dictates before handing over the Sqn pennant.



53 Sig Sqn Handover to Maj G Smith

Maj Longcake then addressed the Sqn saying how sad it was to leave a Sqn where from Tp Comd he has held every officer PID available! **Maj Smith** stressed that **Maj Longcake** would still be welcome in the Sqn and that a "so long" was in order rather than a "good bye". Curry and refreshments were then enjoyed by all as **Maj Longcake** regaled us with stories which included the great war of Nescliffe Camp and the battles of SENTA and Sennybridge (there where also some stories of Operational tours, but they didn't attract as much attention!). **Maj Longcake** now assumes responsibility for R Signals Reserve Training within TDT.

37 Signal Regiment St David's Day Dinner (*Dewi Sant 37 Catrawd Signalau*)

In true tradition St David's day was celebrated at 53 (Wales & Western) Signal Squadron (*53 Sgwadron Signalau (Cymru a'r Gorllwin Lloeger)*). The night was a true six course Welsh dinner with entertainment provided by pipes and drums and the Cardiff Arms Park Male Voice Choir.

New attendees were required to "eat the leek". Comd 2 Sig Gp (**Col Hutchinson**), OC 230 Sig Sqn 16 SR, the Ops Ofrr and SPSI 53 Sqn. The SPSI won hands down and was the people's choice but as the CO declared the winner, **Col Hutchinson** took home the trophy! The night was finished off in the Sqn bar with a disco and more drinks; overall a really enjoyable and successful night, with thanks going to the organisers for a job well done.

53 Sig Sqn Global Trot 1 - by LCpl Davies

We arrived at the Army Reserve Centre at 1930 hours on the Friday where we quickly sorted out all the equipment needed to be taken on to the vehicles. Once the vehicles' first works

had been completed, we moved in convoy up to Sennybridge Camp where we were met by the SPSIs who briefed us on what was happening on the weekend and issued us our room keys. Once settled into the rooms we were feeling a bit peckish so were going to try the 24hr pizza machine that we had spotted; sadly no one took the plunge to go first, so no one bothered.

The next morning we started by meeting up with those from 48 and 54 Sqns who were joining us for the weekend before having breakfast in the cookhouse and then moved onto lessons on VP and Airwave, delivered by **Sgt Prosser**. Whilst this was going on **LCpl McDonald** went to recce his off road route for the Sunday and being an experienced driving instructor, of course got stuck! So he and the SPSIs spent the morning lying in the mud digging it out.



Self Recovery

The lessons were very helpful for certain soldiers such as **Pte Conway** (our RAMC Medic) who had very limited experience with the terminal and speaking on it. Once the lessons were completed we were split into groups and given radios and maps.

After filling our bellies in the cook house once again the exercise started with us navigating the vehicles to the drop off points for each individual team. Once the team had reached the drop off point it was their jobs to get to all the check points and over to the finish where we were staying the night. Whilst we were navigating we were also carrying Bowman manpacks and airwave terminals; which both had a heavy amount of radio traffic to deal with.

The navigation route wasn't too difficult but did have a few cheeky bits to it and sadly the weather didn't help; as in true Welsh fashion it was miserable on the hills especially at the top where comms and nav did get difficult at times.

Thankfully every group made it to the finish by their own steam apart from **LCpl Wong's** group who did get a bit navigationally challenged, shall we say. Once over the finish line our wet bodies were welcomed with a drying room and warm showers "WHAT A TREAT"! After sorting out all our admin and eating our delicious rations we bashed down till the morning.

Sunday morning we awoke to yet more rain but thankfully we didn't have to go into the hills in it again today. We moved to Dixie's corner where we did off road driving, map reading and learnt how to first work a GS Land Rover correctly. After this had taken place we moved back to our Army Reserve Centres where we cleaned and put away all the equipment used.

To summarise, it was an enjoyable weekend consisting of elements of trade and military skills, which should have either taught new or refreshed everyone who attended.



54 (WORCESTERSHIRE) SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj C Quincey**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) M Evans**

As inclement weather wrought havoc to the nations flood plains, the Regiment's HRR (High Readiness Reserve) was called in to action. The effort was led by **Capt Dave Dewfall**, 2IC 54 Sp Sqn, who despatched a number of ICS detachments across the country at 24 hours notice. Teams deployed to 'Gold' and 'Silver' emergency headquarters throughout southern England, maintaining a vital and much needed service.

The Squadron tested its trade skills on Ex SQUADRON TROT 3 in February. With soldiers deploying Bowman detachments in the damp weather; morale managed to remain high with **Sgt Morgan Gilbert** spreading cheer throughout the detachments.

Exercise GLOBAL MATT 4 in March saw soldiers complete their annual training tests. With the training year drawing to a close, long forgotten members of the Squadron appeared from the ether to ensure they qualify for their annual bounty!!

In Mar, **Sig Darren Roland** won the Poulter's Plate trophy for the best Soldier in the Regiment. **Sig Roland** was rewarded for his commitment to the Reserves, being a keen soldier, tradesman and having represented the Army Reserves in football. Support Squadron also won the CO's Best Squadron award – again; with **Cpl Russ Taylor** winner of the best contributor (to the competition) for which he received a day out on a Jaguar Landrover cross country experience. This month also saw members of the Squadron take part in a football match against 81 Sig Regt.



Cpl Taylor receives the CO's Prize

Exercise GLOBAL TROT 3 – Nescliffe Training Area 7 - 9 February 2014 - "Any fool can be cold and wet"

As the weekend approached, the forecast didn't look good. The newspapers were gleefully describing the super storm that was forming in the Atlantic and the further destruction about to strike Britain. We had heard that another reserve Signal Regiment (39) had been mobilised to assist with the Somerset floods. After a year where the Regimental focus had been on military skills, culminating in the Regimental Annual Deployment Exercise in Germany, it was time to re-balance the scales by deploying the communication assets.

As well as refreshing the trade skills of the Regiment, the second objective was for 2 Signal Group to inspect and validate our procedures. The Squadrons converged on the Nescliffe Training Area on Friday night and we got our heads down ready for the next day, lulled to sleep by the rain tapping on the tin roof of the Nissen Huts!

Saturday morning dawned and the storm had claimed its first victim. **Sgt Tony Shakespeare** had received news that his chimney had blown down, so he had to go home and assess the damage! The four Bowman Dets deployed into the woods and set up on a hard standing. On the plus side this meant that the Land Rovers and trailers didn't sink in mud, on the negative side, the 9x9 tents couldn't be pegged down (the problem of preventing the tents becoming airborne was resolved with Jerry cans, fallen branches and lumps of masonry).



Nescliffe training area on a wet weekend in Feb

The 2 CSTs were luckier, as they deployed into a building of opportunity! The comms set up was tested and was not found wanting.

Despite the weather everybody seemed in high spirits, and as always on reserve weekends, pulled together to make sure that if anybody had suffered from skill fade, that no one was left struggling, but brought up to speed. Everybody was smiling throughout, but the smiles got bigger at the end of the day, when we packed up the Dets to go back into camp.

Saturday night was a social evening in camp, apart from one squadron, who decided to visit the local Chinese restaurant. Sunday was set aside for cross training with people from the CSTs going on to the Bowman Dets and vice versa; to ensure that no one is over specialised! It's not good to put all the eggs in one basket and we always stay flexible.

Despite the weather, it was another excellent weekend, which can be summed up in a former CO's phrase "Sweat, Grin and Brag" - Hard work, glad to finish and head home, but proud to have done it!



Comms set up on Ex GLOBAL TROT 3



38th (STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) SHEFFIELD



CO **Lt Col A J Quinn**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) V Walsh**

Update from RHQ

In February the Regiment waved farewell to **Lt Col Simon A Smith** who has since moved across to Brigade Headquarters in his new capacity as SO1 FR20 Transition, working within the newly formed 2 Signal Group. We thank him for his commitment and hard work and wish him all the very best in his new role.

In turn we welcome our new and very last Commanding Officer, **Lt Col Andy J Quinn** to the Regiment and wish him well in his unenviable role of removing the Regiment from the Army's Order of Battle by August of 2015.

Understandably it has been a reflective and poignant time for the unit. Over the past few months we have lost three from five sub-units. 2 (City of Dundee & Highland) Signal Squadron moved across to 32 Signal Regiment earlier in the year. They were followed by 41 (Princess Louise's Kensington) Signal Squadron moving across to 71 Signal Regiment on the 1 April and also on 1 April, 1 Signal Squadron based across the locations Bletchley, Banbury and Rugby was removed from the British Army's Order of Battle.

1 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj S Osei-Agyemang**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) M Gott**

Abridged History



Chained Swan that has been used as the Squadron's logo since formation

Originally formed in 1830, the Buckinghamshire Yeomanry was despatched to Egypt in April 1915 as the 1st Buckinghamshire Yeomanry and took part in the Gallipoli campaign from August to December 1915. After further service in Egypt, the unit was reduced to become part of C Battalion, Machine Gun Corps.

By the time of the Second World War, it had been re-formed as 99th (Buckinghamshire & Berkshire Yeomanry) Field Brigade RA. The Regiment served in France and Belgium in 1940 as part of the 2nd Division. It remained with the 2nd Division when it went to India in 1942, and then to Burma in 1944 and 1945.

It went through various iterations after the Second World War and was disbanded in 1986.

On 1 April 1995, the Squadron was re-formed at Bletchley from a detachment of 5 Squadron, 39 Signal Regiment and 602 Signal Troop. It adopted the hitherto dormant subtitle, 'Royal Buckinghamshire Yeomanry' on 20 Oct 1996. The Squadron left 39 Signal Regiment and became an independent combined Reserve and Regular unit on 1 Jul 1999.

In 2009, the Royal Signals Reserve reorganisation saw the regular element and TA element split and form their own Squadrons.



In deep reflection. L – R: SSgt Mark Taylor, WO2 (YofS) Mark Neillings (getting used to the AAC beret), SSgt Ian Chalmers, Cpl Jon Melling

Additionally during the re-organisation, both 89 and 5 (QOOH) Signal Squadrons were scaled down and became Troops of the new Reservist 1 Signal Squadron.

On 3 July 2013, the White Paper 'Reservists in the Future Force 2020: Valuable and Valued' was released. It directed that 1 Signal Squadron was to be withdrawn from the British Army's Order of Battle.

At 0930hrs on Sat 5 April 2014, the Squadron conducted its final parade with a drumhead service and flag ceremony.

Highlights

- Established for 120 personnel, the Squadron was around 70% recruited as of July 2013 when the announcement to withdraw was made.



- Since the announcement, 34 personnel are now parading at Banbury Army Reserve Centre (ARC) and will join 142 Squadron, The Royal Logistics Corps; 10 are joining 678 Squadron, Army Air Corps at Blakelands ARC in Milton Keynes, predominantly as Aviation Communicators; 6 are remaining at Bletchley ARC to form the nucleus of the Military Intelligence grouping that will be based there.
- Three, including the Officer Commanding have remained in the Royal Corps of Signals.
- Some have joined other Army units including the Guards, Light Infantry and the Yeomanry.
- Since forming in 2009, over 50% of the Squadron has deployed on all Operations – HERRICK, TELIC, OCCULUS and TOSCA and to the Falklands.
- Over 30 personnel deployed on Op OLYMPIC (2012) in London.

Honours and Awards

- The prestigious Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire's Certificate recipients includes **WO2 Alderslade-Flowers**, **SSgt Vernon** and **Sgt Quantrell**.
- Best Reservist for Buckinghamshire Award recipients include **Cpl Larman** (2012); **LCpl Garrett** (2011).

Ex SWAN SONG

Ex SWAN SONG was the Squadron's battlefield tour to London over the weekend 28 February to 2 March 14. It was a fantastic event with immense training value, thanks to the PSAO, **Capt Kev Taylor**, who led in the planning and organisation. The weekend included visits to HMS Belfast and the National Army Museum.



Farewell Dinner at the Victory Services Club in LondonA

An all-ranks dinner was held at the Victory Services Club on Saturday night, which proved valuable for enhancing "international cultural relations" for some Squadron members.



Battlefield Tour and Cultural Activities in London

The Troops even had the chance to nurse their sore heads on a leisurely cruise on the Thames, finishing off at Planet Hollywood. It was an excellent weekend that was thoroughly enjoyed by all members of the Squadron – there were many stories from the weekend, none of which can be repeated!

Final Parade at Bletchley ARC (Ex SWAN FINALE)

The idea of a dawn Drumhead Service to celebrate the Squadron and embrace the future was adjusted after it became obvious that we would struggle to keep the PSAO awake – so we went for the more sensible time of 0930hrs.

After much frantic organisation to ensure that anything that was worth anything had been suitably disposed of (correction: handed over), the day finally arrived. Our guests started arriving earlier than we anticipated – the Lord Lt for Buckinghamshire, the High Sheriff and Lady Sheriff, The Mayor, Assistant Commander 11 Signal Brigade (**Col Chris Edwards**), The Hon Col, Commanding Officer, Second-in-Command and Regimental Sergeant Major from 38 Signal Regiment, Commanding Officer 5 Military Intelligence Battalion and Officer Commanding (Des) 63 Military Intelligence Company and of course **Padre Maj Mentzel** from Bicester Garrison.



Group Photo: Final Parade attendees

After the initial briefing in the Lynx Bar, the Padre took the stage and conducted a most poignant service, at the end of which even the normally rock-solid **SSgt Chalmers** was in deep reflection. **SSgt Vernon** (SQMS) who had organised the parade to an exceptionally high standard handed over the parade to **Maj Osei-Agyemang**. Unfortunately, the OC's spurs decided they wanted to play too and would not remain in his gleaming black boots.



LCpl Amie Daniel lowers the Squadron flag for the last time

When all were ready, **Cpl Jimmy Allen** promptly gave a moving rendition of the Last Post on his bugle, while **Cpl Colclough** and **LCpl Daniel** lowered the 1 Signal Squadron Flag for the last time for the Padre to bless it – the OC refuses to confirm or deny that it was a tear that was running down his cheek as the flag came down.



The Lord Lt of Buckinghamshire, **Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher** presented a signed flag to each of the three group leads: **SSgt Taylor** for those of our members transferring to 142 Sqn RLC, **WO2 (Yofs) Neillings** for those joining 678 Sqn AAC and **SSgt Chalmers** for those joining 63 Coy Int Corps and proceeded to thank the troops for their excellent service.



SSgt Ian Chalmers, receiving the presentation on behalf of those transferring to the Intelligence Corps

The parade concluded with the raising of the Intelligence Corps Flag after which everyone went to the bar for the last time as a Squadron, to reminisce and receive their presentation of the 1 Squadron Chained Swan.



Maj Sam Osei-Agyemang, inviting Sir Henry Aubrey-Fletcher to present flags

The Squadron remains grateful for the tremendous support it has received over the years from the entire Royal Signals community and our cracking bunch of fine men and women are looking forward to an exciting future in their new roles. Until we meet again, goodbye!

CERTA CITO

41 (PRINCESS LOUISE'S KENSINGTON) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj E McLeod**
SSM **WO2 S May**

41 (PLK) Sig Sqn's FIBUA weekend - by Sig Tom Watkinson

For what turned out to be the last weekend as 41 (PLK) Signal Squadron, we deployed on a FIBUA weekend in Lydd Camp.

There we were taught the basics, on house and room clearances and how to hold a house, as well as defend it with murder holes, booby traps etc etc. Our first Platoon attack was led by the OC, with **SSgt Colin Anderson** as platoon 2IC. Afterwards the OC decided to play enemy for the rest of the weekend, to give others a chance to lead an assault and show how sneaky he could be at setting traps and ambushes.

The more we learnt the more the platoons and sections gelled together and started working as a team, until eventually on the final assault it was running like clockwork. The Fire Support group were giving constant fire, keeping the enemy's heads down, and the assaulting section made quick work of scaling the wall and gaining entrance to the building.

The final fire fight lasted around 2 hours, where we sadly lost one fire team due to a suicide vest on the top floor, but we still managed to take the objectives. This weekend was a refreshing change, everyone had a good time and it made everyone who participated not only a better soldier but also produced a renewed keenness to take part in the more challenging activities that the Reserve forces have to offer.

Exercise COCKNEY FREEZE - by LCpl Amie-Louise Daniel

Christmas leave was approaching fast, still buzzing from my latest adventures, mountaineering in Arizona and taking part in Ex LION-STAR in Cyprus. It was safe to say I had itchy feet and was searching for a new adventure. The perfect opportunity appeared when I received a phone call from **Sgt 'DJ' John**, a fellow Arizona buddy asking if I wanted to go on Ex COCKNEY-FREEZE, a Regimental skiing trip. January flew by and it was soon time to board the plane and leave for Les Carroz, a beautiful ski resort in France. I'd never seen so much snow in my life, it was breathtaking. Once everyone was finally sorted with the right kit it was soon time to ski. Being a beginner with absolutely no experience it is quite daunting when you first get on the slopes, I mean throwing yourself off of a mountain isn't exactly a natural thing to do.



Advanced and beginners group photo

After a series of graceful face plants and forgetting how to apply the breaks on many occasions I soon started to get the hang of it. Of course having an instructor as passionate about the sport as ours with his awesome use of vocabulary helped in more ways than one; "Turn Amie turn", "Stop Turning Amie", "Man up" or "I don't care just go!" I thoroughly enjoyed throwing myself off the slopes by the end of the day.

WO2 Andy Medley liked to push us to our limits (to say the least) so by day two he had **Sig Mike Burke** and I throwing ourselves down our first blue runs. After many superwoman dives **WO2 Medley** realised how scared I was and with a bit of encouragement I finally made it to the end of the run, it felt amazing, a well earned pat on the back kind of achievement. I even got a hug.





The Adjt, Capt Tim Hodgkins prepares to test the snowpack

As the days passed the whole group progressed amazingly some picked it up quicker than others and some preferred giving in to gravity and spending most of their time on the deck. Challenges continued with a night ski (because daylight skiing wasn't hard enough) but at least we couldn't tell that this was our first Red run.

Day five and it was time for the Cascades 14km ski run. A few good falls followed by **Sig Mike Burke** playing 'hide and cant seek' with one of his ski poles.



Pte Quilter entering one of the snow shelters

Sig Perry Draycott and I were following **Sgt Claire Norton's** tracks so when she piled into the bank at the side of the trail in a beautifully synchronized, lemming like manner, so did we.

As the days went by skiing became more natural and on the last full day the survivors of the beginners group found their competitive side as we raced the advanced group down a blue run. We WON, all bar the CO who had already made it to the end well before anyone else.

It's safe to say I had the time of my life skiing and it's definitely something I am going to do again. Being home I have already got itchy feet again and am back to looking for



The intermediate group

my next adventure. I would recommend more soldiers get themselves on these AT trips as I am sure they would have just as much fun as we all did even though "it's not a



The CO, Lt Col Simon Smith digging a shelter

holiday". All in all it was an awesome experience and I learnt a lot more than I thought I could.

64 (CITY OF SHEFFIELD) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj S McHenry**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) B Ross**

TEI Course - Meeting the Chief of the Air Staff
- by LCpl Woods

So I'm on this TEI course at MOD St Athan (which is in Barry in south Wales) learning about Temporary Electrical Installations (TEIs) and we're using a Fluke (really useful bit of kit that we use as Royal Signals Electricians when testing our CD checks with LFG Generators) and we're testing the ground and the earthing properties and such like. So I'm working with my team doing all this so there's wires plugged into the ground from the back of the fluke so I can't move. I'm kinda of 'glued' to the spot as it were and who should turn up? Only the Chief of the Air Staff. Now with the course being run on an RAF camp you'd think he'd want to talk to the RAF guys on my course, but no (it probably didn't help that the RAF guy next to me was in an MTP jacket mind) so he instantly came to me and I couldn't move!

Asked what we were doing and was it 'fluke' that we'd get it right, explained that no sir, that's the name of the equipment





LCpl Woods meeting the Chief of the Air Staff

we were using, I explained what we were doing, asked if I was a regular serving soldier and I explained I was a reservist from 38 Signal Regiment, 64 Squadron up in Sheffield and he said yes, he knew where Sheffield was (and there was a little chuckling amongst the other sirs, sergeant majors and warrant officers)

Asked if this was part of my mandatory training days which I confirmed was right and asked how long I'd been a reservist and what I did outside my TA role and I explained I work as Business Customer Service Advisor for o2/Capita Partnership.

Then he asked me my opinion on recruiting more reservists and I said as someone who's worked on the recruiting team for my own unit, I'd like to see a lot more of ex Regulars come through as Reservists as they have a lot of knowledge and experience that they can pass on to others, he agreed with me.

All in all, a really nice down to earth person to talk to, just a bit daunting as he's got so many letters after his name, but its not every day that you get to meet a Chief of Staff as a Reservist eh?

Exercise LIGHTNING STRIKE 21 – 23 Feb 2014
- by LCpl 'Ginge' Dunker

Each year all the budding Officer Cadets from across the country from all UOTCs are still at a loss on who/what they want to be, and each year every Regiment put on an alluring event in order to sell their cap badge.

Ours was Ex LIGHTNING STRIKE held at Blandford Camp. This is the Royal Signals' chance to bribe, persuade and steal any potential boys and girls to strengthen the Corps.

The aim of the game is to put on a challenging yet fun command task for each team to complete. Scoring is based upon planning, briefing, completion and whether they had huge smiling faces throughout for the morale/best spirits trophy.



The mighty 64 Signal Squadron represented the unit, still living on and going strong with our task incorporating semaphore, blister safes and grass swimming.

Spearheading the event: **Capt Olly Pearson**, 64 OPSO, assisted by **Cpls Wasden and Smart**. Myself and **Sig 'Mac' McMellon** and **Sig 'I don't know if I've mentioned this before but I used to be UOTC!' Casey**.

The brief given by the boss was that in order to re-supply Parliament with much needed stock we had to transmit a message that is locked in the safes with 3 members of your team on the other side of a raging torrent which has washed away the bridge, using semaphore send over the code to return the important message. Prior to this a lesson was given on how to crack the safe with an opening address of "these are nicknamed blister safes due to the fact if you attempt it incorrectly a blister agent will release and burn your skin and eyes, we have had 2 hospitalised already today so please pay attention", (once the instructor had seen the desired shocked looks and gasps of panic he then admitted it was a lie and not to panic, the joke was still funny 13 times over to each group).

All in all every person involved with the exercise enjoyed the day and the fluidity of transfers between stands was beautiful culminating into a fun filled final relay race.



The final relay race

Dine-in of Lt Col Andy J Quinn, CO 38 Signal Regiment
- by SSgt Leon Bancroft

38 Signal Regiment held a combined Warrant Officers' & Senior NCO Mess and Officers' Mess dinner to dine-in the new Commanding Officer **Lt Col A J Quinn**.

The evening was organised by **SSgt Rob Vickers** and **SSgt Danny McGallivray-Jones** and held in the Mess at Endcliffe Hall which is a very splendid setting, where on arrival we were greeted with champagne and music from a three-piece string ensemble on an elevated landing. From there we moved to the spectacular dining hall and took our respective seats.

The strings played softly throughout the meal and everyone was in good spirits enjoying the great food with wine flowing along with the banter.

As with all dinner nights, after the port and speeches, it was time to retire to the bar and dance floor for the remainder of the evening. Maybe a few people were afraid to show their dance moves but I however led the way.

All in all an excellent evening on which I am sure everyone enjoyed themselves.





39th (SKINNERS) SIGNAL REGIMENT (VOLUNTEERS) BRISTOL



CO Lt Col Cosgrove MBE
RSM WO1 (RSM) W Scarrott

43 (WESSEX) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC Maj B Nixon
SSM WO2 (SSM) S Donnelly

Exercise WESSEX TROT – by OCdt Payne

43 (Wx) Signal Squadron deployed late on Friday night to Caerwent Training Area for what would be their final exercise before the amalgamation of 43 (Wx) Signal Squadron and 57 (City and County of Bristol) Signal Squadron. With the forthcoming amalgamation imminent, OC 43 and OC 57 decided to use the second phase of the exercise as an opportunity to conduct a joint training and testing serial.

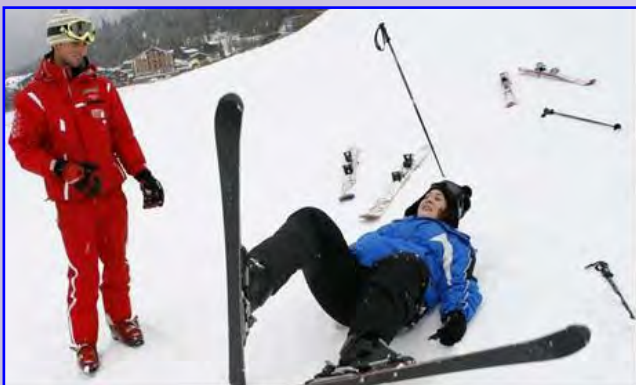
Ex WESSEX TROT was a UK Ops scenario based around lessons learned by 39SR force elements engaged on the recent Op PITCHPOLE deployment in support of flood hit areas in SW England. The main effort of the weekend was to brush up on CST, Airwave and Bowman training and deployment.

The weekend training programme proved to be both effective and enjoyable, providing the first opportunity for personnel from 43 and 57 Signal Squadrons to work together under a single command. On the basis of the successes and smooth running of this training exercise, we look forward to the approaching amalgamation and working and training together as a combined Squadron.

A huge thank you must go to **LCpl Davis** and **Sig Hutchinson** from our neighbours at 21 Signal Regiment for deploying on the Exercise in support of our Sqn. A mention must also go to **SSgt Kendall** and **SSgt Rowlands** who both deployed on the exercise for the love of Queen and Country since they had already used up their respective annual training day allocations, and so deployed with us on an unpaid basis.

Adventurous Training

Three very fortunate members of the Sqn, **LCpl Simpson**, **Sig Craig** and **Pte James** made the most of a recent skiing trip to Sankt Johann in Austria, where **LCpl 'Simo' Simpson** led from the front as ever, despite spending a fair amount of his piste time in the horizontal position!



LCpl Simpson leading from the front

Other Squadron Business

It is with deep sadness that the Sqn is due to wave a fond farewell to **WO2 (SSM) Donnelly**, who leaves us shortly having completed his two year tour as SSM. Ever willing to lead from the front and invariably setting and maintaining very high standards, he will be sorely missed by all members of the Sqn. Among **Mr Donnelly's** many achievements in post, perhaps the most notable was his receipt of a Commendation for Outstanding Contribution to the stabilisation programme whilst serving in Afghanistan.

56 SIGNAL SQUADRON – EASTBOURNE

OC Maj S Trevelion
SSM WO2 (SSM) R Vincent

The Squadron continues to carry on business as usual with event after event to retain the soldiers during this period of change. We welcomed in to the location **WO2 Mick Warren** and **Cpl Nicki Hall** as the recruiting representatives from the PWRR. They are now assuming responsibility for the recruits at the Squadron and are becoming a familiar sight on Tuesday evenings. **WO2 Warren** is used to the Squadron after running recruit selection at Crowborough for the past few years with which the Squadron worked closely. Both **WO2 Warren** and **Cpl Hall** joined the Squadron on its adventure training weekend so they could start to become more integrated into the existing Squadron family. In addition we are receiving regular visits from the PWRR SPSI with a view to running combined training in the near future so there is a smoother transition when the time comes.

Congratulations go to **Sgt Ben Carter** who has recently completed his Senior CLM course and to **LCpl Paul Gendre**, **Sig Kerrie Edmonds** and **Sig Rosie Twomey** who are due to complete their CMT Class 3 course next week. Whilst all three are still uncertain where they plan to transfer, this qualification will help them become more employable outside of the Corps. On a sadder note the Squadron also said goodbye to one of its longest serving members, **LCpl Mick Scott**, who hangs up his boots after nearly 30 years of service in the military. Prior to joining the reserve forces **LCpl Scott** was a medic in the RAF where his greatest claim to fame was accompanying then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher on helicopter journeys. **LCpl Scott** will be sorely missed as he has been the virtual Squadron mascot for over a decade.

Royal Signals Snowboarding - Exercise MERCURY SNOW RIDER 5 - by Sig Scott Backler

Sigs Jamie Goodwin, **Rosie Twomey** and I joined troops from the Royal Signals, Regular and Reserve at the Austrian ski resort of Rauris to take part in a very successful Corps snowboarding camp. Having trekked from the UK, through the Channel Tunnel to Austria, we were met by the beautiful Austrian winter scenery. The majority of this camp was made up of novice riders, however with excellent tuition from the Ripstar snowboard instructors and the more experienced Corps riders, the novices were riding confidentially, and were soon attempting things that you could expect from an advanced rider. After each day of exhausting snowboarding practice we had the chance to relax by going for a swim, or just spending time in the sauna or hot tub. Tough work for some! We also had the chance to travel to Zell am See and visit the 'Le Resistance' snowboard shop for any gear.





The Fun Begins

The competition bar was set very high by the advanced and intermediate riders and some very good snowboarding was seen by all. The qualifying races for the novice riders took place after only a week's snowboarding tuition and the standard of snowboarding was excellent. The slalom race phase also showed impressive advanced and intermediate rider's abilities but many people were more impressed by the determination of the novices who attacked the slalom with gusto.



Just keep the focus

The advanced and intermediate riders took part in a slope style competition, performing tricks of kickers, and also being on the short end of many falls. The final races of the exercise

were the boarder cross races, which proved possibly to be the most difficult, with hard crashes being a regular occurrence. However, everyone for the most part, got straight back on their feet to try and push for first or second place and go through for the next round. Overall Exercise MERCURY SNOW RIDER 5 was a resounding success, with its biggest year to date, and I only hope that it becomes even bigger next year.



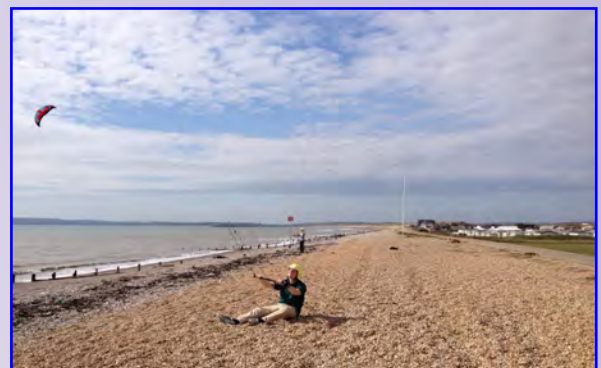
Competition time

Exercise MARTELLO SWANSONG - by Sig Zack Jenkinson



Sig Jenkinson on target

The Squadron ran an adventure training and social weekend over the sunniest weekend so far this year!. On Saturday 15 March we went to Camber Sands for a day of power-kiting, kite-bugging and kite-boarding which for most Squadron members was a new experience.



Sig Holding sits down on the job



The lack of experience was obvious when the tide went out as we attempted to ride the buggies down the sand with most people struggling to stay on for more than 30 seconds. In the case of **LCpl Mick Scott** his focus was to keep the board upright for more than 10 seconds and to avoid ending up head first in the ocean.



LCpl Scott proving it's not that easy

After a fun social on Saturday night, Sunday was spent at the Polowood Clay Pigeon Centre at Falmer. They run a range of activities and we had the chance to do a round robin of clay pigeon shooting, archery, axe throwing and shooting targets with air rifles.



When you run out of bullets...

We were split into 4 teams and everyone completed a practice on each activity before going round again and getting scored to see who came out on top overall. The axe throwing was probably the most difficult, most people actually getting the axe wedged into the boards more by luck than skill.



SSgt Charnock axe throwing

Having said that our new PSI (Tech), **SSgt Charnock**, seemed to be getting the hang of it.

A good weekend was had by all and one that we will all remember as the last AT weekend with 56 Signal Squadron.

57 SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj Paul Rodenhurst**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) Richard Vise**

57 Signal Squadron Final Report – by Capt Andy Peters

It is with a large amount of sadness that I write the final wire notes entry for 57 (City and County of Bristol) Signal Squadron. For the last 8 years I have called 57 my home, and I know many of the Squadron have been a part of 57 for much longer, but on 1 April 2014 the Squadron will no longer be a part of the 39 Sig Ret ORBAT. The Bristol based Troop is joining 43 Squadron (based in Bath) and will be under their command as of 1 April. The Gloucester based Troop will temporarily be commanded by 43 (and supported by a small number of 57 SHQ who are in the process of finding new jobs) until they become a part of 53 Signal Squadron (based in Cardiff) in the not so distant future. Although the two Troops will end up in new Squadrons I am confident that their extemporary dedication and professionalism, that has seen 57 Squadron win the CO's Cup two years in a row, will continue for years to come.

The Squadron has spent the last couple of months exercising our communications assets (see HORFIELD TROT below) and supporting Op PITCHPOLE where a large number of the Squadron were deployed to detachments, the 39 Sig Regt ComCen in HORFIELD and as trainers for deployed operators. The Squadron did an amazing job, as would be expected, proving that all the hard work that everyone has put into exercises and our Annual Deployment this year has been worthwhile and has created an extremely capable unit.

Final Exercise, Exercise HORFIELD TROT

Following on from the extremely successful detachment level exercise in February, Ex BRUNEL FROLIC, the Squadron used Ex HORFIELD TROT as an opportunity to demonstrate our ability to deploy and support communication detachments at Squadron level. The weekend was a huge success, with all training objectives completed and a lot of valuable lessons learnt. The weekend also saw the opportunity for the Squadron flag to be flown for the last time.



OC and SSM with the 57 Flag



A look forward

The Sqn is now looking forward to our final event where we will celebrate with past and present members in June. The only thing that remains to be said, and I am sure that all current and former members would agree with me, is that it has been an honour to be a part of 57 Signal Squadron. The name 57 may be going but the ethos will continue.

93 (NORTH SOMERSET YEOMANRY) SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj A W Morris**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) R Vise**

The Squadron have enjoyed a busy period since the last edition of *The Wire*, deploying in support of the Regiment on a number of Exercises, sending individuals away on skiing and sailing exercises and practising for the forthcoming Operational Shooting Competition in Pirbright as well as supporting the CO's Main Effort; Op FORTIFY.

During this period we have had to say farewell to **Maj Robin Fitzpatrick** and **WO2 (YofS) Emma Butcher** who are both assigned to the unposted list, as well as **Capt Karen Hanlon** and **Cfn Chris Painter** who have both left the Army Reserves. Joining us are **WO2 (SSM) Richie Vise** and **SSgt Bev Bevan**, both transferred in from 57 Signal Squadron and at the time of writing, we are hoping that **Capt Gaz Topps** will be joining us as Sqn 2IC.

Exercise LYNX GLACIER IV - by WO2 Chris Stockwell

The first week of February saw Officers and Soldiers from the Regiment travel to St Johann im Pongau located in the Alpendorf region of Austria for a week of adventurous training. The aim of the exercise was for personnel to conduct various levels of Ski Foundation and continuation training. After a short flight and coach trip the intrepid skiers arrived in time for a hearty Austrian meal before being allocated groups and instructors.

The Ski Foundation 1 group was run under the expert eye of **Cpl 'Ginge' Haines** who embarked on a week of basic ski techniques with the novices. As the week went on the group progressed through the basics including stopping, snow plough turns and mastering lifts. **Sig Fiona Craig** and **Pte Penny James** even mastered the art of skiing without skis as they slid down a short section of piste in just ski boots. Eventually the group moved up from the nursery slopes during the week and joined some of the experienced skiers on the last day. The most improved novice award was given to **Sig Anna Burgoyne** who made excellent progress during the week.

The continuation group had a busy schedule planned and started with a couple of days of general skiing intended to hone individual skills and get the "ski legs" settled in. An instructor was supplied by the resort for a day to give the group exercises to work on and improve all round skills which proved invaluable for everyone. A day of ski touring followed that gave everyone a reminder of how walking up the piste instead of taking the lifts requires more effort. The challenge came at the top of a steep incline that required some interesting "falling over techniques" from some of the group. Some basic mountain survival skills followed with emergency snow holes and avalanche safety being practiced. The group continued to work on their techniques for the remainder of the week and got around 100 ski miles under their belts.

During the course of the week several Après ski activities were laid on including sledging of which **LCpl Gareth 'Simmo' Simpson** gained the award for the fastest run closely followed by **Sig Jodie 'Ninja' Williams**. A night at a local Spa resulted in

a welcome break and allowed the group to relax after a few hard days skiing (!).

The more advanced Ski Foundation 2 group embarked on a mixed week of downhill, touring and mountain safety training led by chief instructor **WO1 Bob Wilkins**. The group started with an assessment of their current skills and moved on to touring after a few days. The mountain safety training included digging snow holes and getting used to some of the personal equipment required to survive in extreme conditions. Once again **LCpl Gareth Simmonds** was given an award for his improved skiing ability and fearlessness shown during the course.

Once again this year's expedition was meticulously planned by OC 93 Squadron **Maj Andy Morris** with assistance from the Regimental Ops team. The exercise proved very successful with a majority of people achieving a ski qualification or enhancing their experience within the continuation group.



Operational Shooting Competition – Preparation Weekend - by Sig Martin

As part of the first Regimental Development Weekend (RDW) of the training year the Regimental Shooting Team were given dispensation not to parade at Blandford with the rest of the Regiment, but to deploy to Ash Ranges to take part in what can only be described as an "awesome training event". All who attended had nothing but smiles on their faces as we managed to fire more than the customary 25 rounds associated with Live Firing 3, and this coupled with good weather meant that the training weekend was thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended.



Regimental Development Weekend 14 - 6 April 2014 - by Cpl Turner (RLC)

93 Support Squadron took part in our first Regimental weekend of the year with 39 Signal Regiment. There was a lot going on with something for everyone, regardless of trade. Even two of our chefs turned their hands at communications training packages, which must be a first!

With the new drive from the Regt to improve overall fitness levels we had PT both days with a steady state run Saturday that was split into three groups, fast, slower and even slower! All able bodied members of the Regiment then joined in for circuit training on Sunday morning, whilst our prospective Lanyard Trophy team fitted in some loaded march training in preparation for Septembers event in Dumfries and Galloway.

Our CS Operators had the opportunity to conduct CST and Reebok training, whilst our untraded soldiers completed Weekend 2 of their BSS training package.

In addition, a course of Officer and SNCO development training took place, of which I was a part. I found this to be challenging, insightful and a definite eye opener in terms of my future career path.

Exercise MERCURY WINDY TRAILS - by Sgt 'Mojo' Morris

Exercise MERCURY WINDY TRAILS is the Royal Signals Yacht Club (Offshore) Sail Training Week conducted from the Joint Adventurous Sail training Centre in Gosport, which this year took place over the period 31 Mar – 4 Apr 14. The main aim of the week is to introduce Officers and Soldiers to Offshore Sailing. Due to an injury to the unfortunate **Sgt Cassie Downs**, I managed to take her place at the last minute.

After reporting to Gosport and meeting up with other crew members, we were introduced to Dosnia, a Victoria class 34ft

Yacht which was going to be our home for the next few days. We spent the first afternoon conducting safety drills and practical training in preparation for our voyage. Although accommodation was tight, it was cosy, and yours truly was nominated for chef duties and even managed to cook a full English breakfast each morning for the rest of the crew.

At last, on Tuesday Morning, our moorings were slipped and we set sail, only to stop at Gillkicker Point to practise 'Man Over Board' drills. Once all had attempted these, we happily set sail down the Solent towards the Isle of Wight. Over the next few days we enjoyed good weather, clear skies and best of all some breeze in our sails.

I, **Sgt John Morris** and the other members from the Regiment, **Sgt Sue Palfrey**, **Sig Jodi Williams** and **LCpl Chris Platt** all enjoyed the experience and would recommend the Exercise to any budding sailor, whether experienced or novice.



71st (CITY OF LONDON) YEOMANRY SIGNAL REGIMENT BEXLEYHEATH

CO **Lt Col J Picton QC**
RSM **WO1 (RSM) M Whitfield MBE**

47 (MIDDLESEX YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj M Curtis-Rouse**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) G Shorthouse**
SPSI **SSgt P Tinsley**

The last few months have been demanding for the Squadron with support to Op PITCHPOLE dominating the majority of its activities in February, Exercise PHOENIX GALLOP in March and the build up to the forthcoming merger with 41 (PLK) Signal Squadron in April.

The Squadron has recently temporarily acquired a 2Lt, **Matt Osment**, borrowed from our sister unit, 68 (ICCEY) Signal Squadron. This has been somewhat of a novelty for us, as YO's are a rare breed in the Army Reserve, and it has been some time since many of the unit have seen one. Nonetheless **2Lt Osment** has settled quickly into the Squadron, taking on the command of the illustrious Y Troop.

OP PITCHPOLE - by Cpl Rosie Ewbank

During the winter flooding along the Thames in Berkshire and Surrey, a number of 71 Y Sig Regt's High Readiness Reserve

(HRR) personnel were mobilised to provide comms support to the relief efforts. **Cpl Jay Hennigan** from 47 Sig Sqn deployed with **Cpl Paul Broadbent** from 256 Sp Sqn, initially to 39 Sig Regt RHQ in Bristol. From there they deployed to Guildford Police HQ, conveniently located on an extremely steep hill, where Gold and Silver Commands were co-located. Their main objective was the provision of a VTC facility so that elements of the Gold military support team could participate in daily briefings and updates with other users from across 2 Bde. Initially, due to issues with the building infrastructure, the use of the BGAN was required; however once they got settled in they were able to annex a small room which was fit for purpose with the correct connection. They also provided DII support to military users as floor walkers in both Gold and Silver.

At the end of the first week I replaced **Cpl Hennigan** and went on to work with **Cpl Broadbent** in maintaining and improving the VTC facility. The Gold and Silver HQ was packed with representatives from all the blue light services as well as the Environment Agency all working together to provide the best possible support to those who had been flooded or were in imminent danger. Meanwhile it was business as usual for the police civilian staff who were friendly, helpful and viewed the military presence as a rather amusing novelty. As the rain eased and the days turned sunny the crisis continued as flood water from further up the Thames continued to push its levels



ever higher. Fortunately it couldn't last forever and as the dry weather prevailed water levels began to drop. As the Operation moved from the Crisis Phase to the Recovery Phase a re-location was required in order to hand over to the local authorities. Accordingly we packed up and headed for Kingston County Hall, a grand sprawling building laid out in a figure 8 with internal cobbled courtyards. We ensured everything was set up for our RiP, a CST from 36 Sig Sqn, 39SR before moving back to RHQ at Bexleyheath. Once there we dropped easily into the Ops Room shift rota, easing the pressure on those who had been manning it since the beginning of the Op. As the Operation as a whole moved into the Recovery Phase there was no longer a requirement for Dets on the ground and they trickled back to Bexleyheath for debriefs before heading on to their parent units. As this was the first time the HRR reservists had been called on to mobilise everyone felt proud to have been a part of the flood relief efforts and to have contributed.

Exercise PHOENIX GALLOP - by Maj Mike Curtis-Rouse

Hot off the back of Op PITCHPOLE, the Regimental tempo must continue and such it was that the Squadron deployed to the lofty heights of Cinque Ports Training Area; a deployed comms based exercise designed to assess the capabilities of each of the field Squadrons. The road move on Friday from Uxbridge to the FSA mostly went to plan as the Squadron observed the navigation skills of 2Lt Matt Osment for the first time, with only one slight hiccup, the vehicle packets mostly ended up in the right location.

Taking over a farm on the training area and under direction from Sgt Sophie Spittle and Det Comds LCpl Mike Hone and LCpl Laurie Gregory, the establishment of the radio and data comms nets commenced. The Squadron PSIs had not deployed with the troops and for the first time for many years, the onus was on the Det Comds to establish comms without having our normal safety net of SPSI SSgt Paul Tinsley present to provide a helping hand (we imagined that he was sleeping happily in Tinsley Towers back in Uxbridge).



2Lt Matt Osment briefs the RCMO and FANY 2Lt Becky Flavor

A long time later, in fact, it was pretty much early Saturday morning and HF and VHF comms were finally in and working, and despite that it had taken a good five hours, the satisfaction of being self-sufficient outweighed the absence of sleep.

Saturday morning continued with a focus on setting up the CST and the subsequent provision of a VTC link with the Regimental Ops room. Brief moments of contact with the 68 Sig Sqn indicated that they might have shown some sense in deploying with bacon and eggs – 47's Ops room could practically smell the bacon sandwiches across the ether. It was a sad moment but the discovery of cherry turnovers in the new ORP boxes restored a sense of happiness.

The morning rolled into the afternoon, and our peaceful farm yard home was shaken into life with the arrival of the RCMO, Capt John Robinson accompanied by a member of the FANY, 2Lt Becky Flavor in the guise of staff officers requiring support comms. 2Lt Osment did a sterling job in briefing the visitors, whilst I caught up on some much needed sleep only to be awakened an hour or so later to discover that the RCMO had missed his calling and could have been a baseball star player.



RCMO, Capt John Robinson demonstrates his ball skills

The evening rolled on and the comms surprisingly remained functional and the routine continued. With the mandatory enforced rest period for drivers and effectively the remaining members of the Squadron, I tried to get a few more Z's only to be awakened in the early hours of Sunday morning to hear 2Lt Osment seemingly calling a stand to. This was of course puzzling as the exercise was non tactical. Hearing further cries of "they have her cornered!" was a trifle alarming as was the shout of "build the barricade higher". Fearing the worse, I stumbled into the Ops room to discover the horrible truth... Greedy sheep adjacent to the farm had somehow decided that

the 12m mast guys were a tasty alternative to grass. LCpl Gregory had established a barricade around a chair in the antenna field and was shouting "away sheeps, away", being a native of France we understand her language, though perhaps the sheep didn't!

Fortunately for the sheep, and for the Squadron, Endex was called shortly after the invasion of the antenna field and the Squadron dutifully tore down the Ops room and moved back to the FSA prior to final release and what followed was an uneventful return to the ARC.

Armed Forces Rally Team
- by Cpl Curtis McKerlie and Wolf R2 Driver

The team's first competition of 2014 was the Legend Fires North West Stages Rally. This was based in Blackpool over a rather stormy weekend and was a chance for the newly selected crews to get to know each other and start the process of working together as a unit. Following on from the AFRT Selection Day held at Deepcut on 17 Jan 14, the new pairing of Cpl Curtis McKerlie and Capt Clive Allford as Driver



and Co-Driver approached the North West Stages with a heady mixture of excitement, anticipation and some trepidation. The last time we rallied together unfortunately ended in a trip into a log pile whilst we were winning the Scottish Rally at Dumfries.

We arrived safely at Weeton Camp on the Friday morning and set about preparing the last few bits on R2 and ensuring that we were well prepared for the stages that were to commence that night.

Scrutineering passed with little fanfare and then it was off to the ceremonial start. At this point in the evening everything appeared to be going well and we set off to the first stage, TRAX, a Go Kart circuit on the outskirts of Preston. On route there everything went wrong. R2 developed what could only be described as a death wobble. The Rover literally felt like she was trying to shake herself to pieces. This was affecting us whilst accelerating, braking and steering, although I was able to lessen its effect by steering to the right. We decided to cut our losses and change the front right wheel as this appeared to be the worst affected side. With this task complete we moved on to the first stage and arrived a few minutes past our allocated time.

Setting a good time R2 managed just about to behave during the stage, but, when we were back on the road she started to play up again. We decided to continue on and just take it steady, concentrating on getting to the first Service where hopefully our wonder mechanics would be able to perform some magic. However, half way around the first lap of the stage at Clifton, R2 decided to make us both passengers as she shook so violently that the car took off to the right whilst on almost full right lock. This resulted in the inevitable coming together with the kerb and a puncture - end of stage. R2 heroically limped out of stage and we were able to replace the blown tyre and continue on, finishing the night's event with two runs down the Promenade and into Service. The R2 crew slunk off to bed in rather less than happy moods.



Driver Cpl Curtis Mckerlie and Co-Driver Capt Clive Allford in R2

Saturday morning brought a brisk breeze, sunshine and most importantly light. In Parc Fermé the other crews crowded around R2 and a fault was diagnosed; the mood brightened in the cab of R2.

The puncture on the Clifton stage had resulted in R2 taking a stage maximum time, putting us almost 2 minutes behind the next AFRT Romeo but we set off with a point to prove. Throughout the day we stayed fully on the pace, overtaking an Evo 6, Nissan Micra (at least 3 times) and filling the mirrors of a Subaru WRX on more than one occasion during stages around Weeton Camp and the Docks. As the day wore on the time gap dropped until with 4 stages to go we had a mere 13 seconds to gain in order to catch R1 and take second place behind Paramore and Fisher in R6.

The last 4 stages consisted of two runs through Weeton and two final runs down the Blackpool Promenade. These final stages were in the dark around a tight, slippery and quite technical course. The weather by this point had completely deteriorated and the sea front was awash in sea spray, crashing waves and spectators lining the walls. These two final runs down the sea front were probably the most exciting of the day. R2 managed to finish a respectable 3 out of 5 and just a little over a minute behind R1. We had a great rally and would like to thank the Service crew for fixing R2 so that we could actually finish the event.

68 (INNS OF COURT & CITY AND ESSEX YEOMANRY) SIGNAL SQUADRON

OC **Maj A Orr**
SSM **WO2 (SSM) J Paton**
SPSI **SSgt J Beattie**

Squadron Overview – by Capt John Donaldson

The Squadron is about to undergo a major reconfiguration. The Troop we have had for a considerable period of time, 907 Tp based out of Chelmsford will have left us and will now be sat within 36 Signal Squadron, who are our new neighbours within 71 Y Sig Regt. It is sad to see them go as they have played an important Squadron role over the past few years. We wish them all the best within their new Squadron.

Maj Alex Orr has taken over at the helm as the OC whilst we await the arrival of **Maj Sarah Trevellion**. He has settled in well and along with the 2IC has started to move the Squadron in the right direction at a steady pace.

A number of personnel have been mobilised for Op PITCHPOLE, with **WO2 Tony Perry** and **LCpl Pete Fox** both helping to man the NETCEN at RHQ for a period in March. The Squadron continues to train for its UK Ops contingency role here in London with various exercises and deployments across all spectrums. Recently we have had members involved in comms testing at Wellington Barracks as well as the recent Regimental training weekends and these have been a great success in building up the basic level of military skills across the board. Various members from the Squadron have also attended team medics courses ran at RHQ in Bexleyheath.

The skiing season is very much in full swing and **SSgt Richie Marsh** has been instructing in France with 38 Sig Regt and we have **SSgt Jack Stabler** and **Sgt Ross Nugent** due to go to Tignes, France, for an exped, courtesy of **Capt Stu Kennon**, a former officer with the Squadron. **SSgt Jim Brown** recently returned from sailing around the Canaries on Ex CANARY GOLD.

A highly successful dinner night was held in the last weekend of January. It was also the night when the annual awards where given out, with **LCpl Gary Mills**, **Sig Neil Kerlen** and **Sig Simon Chilton** being the winners. The PSAO was awarded the William Hine award for his contribution to the Squadron over the past year!!

This year promises to be as action packed as the last and there are a number of high profile events that the Sqn will take part in. We will carry out a parade to commemorate the start of the First World War. This will take place at Berkhamsted as we have a memorial erected there in tribute of the training that the Inns of Court Regiment undertook back in 1914. The Squadron, along with over 40 members of the Association, will travel to Normandy in France to participate in the 70th Anniversary of the D-Day landings. The planning for this is in full swing and hopefully we will get the chance to parade before Her Majesty in Normandy on 6 June.



Exercise PHONEIX GALLOP - by LCpl Ros Wiffen

The weekend started slowly with a diversion on the dual carriageway which meant that we did not get into location until nearly 0100 on Sat morning. From there it was all hands to the pump to help set up and establish comms. The 68 Sig Sqn dets were supporting both the SCP and the Regimental CP, and both were soon looking ship shape with comms in place and boards and maps showing the exercise situation - an ash cloud causing several plane crashes.

The dets played host to a variety of LO's from the FANY during the weekend and impressed them with our extensive knowledge of comms. There were also opportunities to get trade workbooks signed off, mostly by a keen **Sgt Warren** who must surely now know what it feels like to be a celebrity with all those autographs he signed!

The weather was great with bright sunshine throughout the weekend, but unfortunately this could not be enjoyed by the operators on shift who were stuck inside a barn where it was actually colder inside than out! A few chinks of sunlight did manage to shine through from outside, just to show us what we were missing. Meanwhile, **LCpl Mills** was keeping 907 Tp entertained by consuming various foodstuffs from the rat packs in an unorthodox manner. Apparently powdered drinks, Tabasco sauce and frothing were involved.

There was a tasking during the exercise to perform a series of reces of potential comms sites. Some sites were found to be adequate and some not, but the highlight of the expedition was the opportunity it afforded **WO2 (SSM) Paton** to sneak up on an unsuspecting **Cpl Kane** who was taking a well earned nap in the landrover whilst waiting for the foot patrol to return. Needless to say he got a rude awakening and the results were captured on camera.

Sadly it was the last comms weekend with 907 Tp (the Essex) as part of the Squadron. As suspicious as we were at first of the Essex Troop with their strange accents and weird coloured berets, they have proved to be a real asset to the Squadron, bringing a strong sense of unit identity, team spirit, buckets of expert knowledge and some dubious humour. We look forward to being friendly(ish) rivals in future.

Overall a very useful weekend where the squadron got to brush up on its trade skills, show off a little, and spend some time in the sunshine.

265 (KENT AND COUNTY OF LONDON YEOMANRY (SHARPSHOOTERS)) SUPPORT SQUADRON

OC **Maj K Wrate**
SSM **SSgt L Griffiths**
SPSI **SSgt C Shackleton**

Squadron Overview – by Maj Keith Wrate

The year's training continued at a pace. The weather however, took its toll on the training programme and the second of our Infantry exercises was changed to 'kit and comms' back at the ARCs and Op PITCHPOLE took a number of key players away to support the flood efforts.

Sgt 'Caz' Castro, **Cpl Paul Broadbent** and **Sigs Dave Prior** and **'Jacko' Jackson** all played a key role in the deployment of the CST as well as the manning of NETCEN71. A great effort was made by all.

We were very pleased to host a visit from our Squadron Colonel, **The Rt Hon Nicholas Soames MP** on 22 January. **Col Nicholas** has a very busy Parliamentary schedule and events

have overtaken us a couple of times recently so we were particularly pleased he could make this evening. We had the opportunity to take him through both our Support role and Communications capability as well as demonstrate the new Man SV(R) currently held by the LAD based at Bexleyheath. In addition, he had the opportunity to meet both **WO2 'Ade' Keeble** and **Sgt 'Caz' Castro** both recently returned from Op HERRICK 18 with 3DSR.

March saw the deployment of **Capt 'Kush' Cooper** on OP HERRICK. After a splendid send off lunch in the previous week, **Kush** left on March 11 for a tour of Afghanistan. We keep in regular contact with the Kent and Sharpshooters Yeomanry Assn (KSYA) under the watchful eye of their Welfare Officer **Mrs Penny O'Hare** who already has the first parcel prepared for shipment. **Penny**, many thanks for your continued support to all the 'Sharpshooters' on deployment, wherever they may be. Thanks also to all Squadron members who contribute to the collections behind the bar and the KSYA and Worshipful Company of Insurers for their tremendous support.

Looking back, the training year has been an eventful one and we have achieved a lot. Attendance on exercises has been excellent and, whilst our numbers may be relatively small, we have never failed to fulfil our role whether medical, re-supply, communications or vehicle maintenance.

A continued effort from the Squadron Recruiting Team (SRT) headed up by **Sgt 'Caz' Castro** and **Sig Danny Wilshire** has secured another 2 recruits to the Squadron, namely **Sig Sarah Becks** and **Sig Nathan Fry**. Welcome to the Squadron and all the very best for your future.

Congratulations go out to **Sig Chris Simpson** and his wife **Megan** on their new arrival to the family, baby **Harvey**, well done.

Visit Of The Rt Hon Nicholas Soames MP - by Capt Steve Slaney

On Tuesday 22 January the Squadron was visited by the Sqn Col, **Rt Honourable Nicholas Soames PC MP**. The Col had not visited the Sqn for about a year so the troops were eager to meet him and show off their detachments and skills. He was met by the OC, **Maj Keith Wrate**, and SSM, **SSgt 'Griff' Griffiths** and shown to the VIP suite where he met officers and SNCOs of the Squadron in a relaxed environment. Typical topics of conversation ranged from Reserve Forces and AF2020 to mobilisation. After the initial meet and greet the hierarchy escorted the Sqn Col to meet members of the LAD. After touring the workshops and garages the Sqn Col was introduced to the MAN SVR by **Cpl Chris Larney** and **Cpl Dave**



The Sqn Col meets Cpl Paul Broadbent with the OC Maj Keith Wrate



Brand. Cpl 'Mo' Butler and the RSE crew were next to meet him and they showed off the FEPS generator in its working environment. A trip to the drill hall followed where **Cpl Paul Broadbent** had set up the Reebok detachment in its full splendour to show to the Sqn Col. He also met potential recruits undergoing command task training with **Cpl Jim Sutton**. The Sqn Col was escorted to the bar by the OC for a crafty beer and another outstanding curry by our resident chef **Pte Sylvia Hirst**. The Sqn Col met members of the sqn informally and presented medals, including the VRSM to **Capt 'Khush' Cooper**. The Sqn Col thanked us for a thoroughly entertaining visit and promised he wouldn't leave it too long next time.



Sqn Col presenting Capt 'Khush' Cooper with his VRSM

Nijmegen Training – by Maj Sean Wardle

It's getting close to that time again and the Stichting Internationale Vierdagse Afstandsmarsen Nijmegen, the organisers of the 98th International Four Day March are no doubt busy getting ready to host the largest marching event in the world. The Regimental Team has been getting put through its paces in preparation for its journey to Holland and the Nijmegen Marches.

Training started one cold morning in January. An early morning start saw the team departing for the first of the day's gentle walks!!! Woolwich Barracks for 5am and heading south over Shooters Hill back to the Army Reserve Centre at Bexleyheath, the six mile route had the team back at base in time for breakfast and a number of lectures about the Marches as well as foot care and basic first aid before finishing off the day with an 8 mile CFT.

February saw no let up in the training with the team up and at the base of Tower Bridge in London for a 0430 set off. The route crossed the bridge and headed south on the Thames Path, heading through south London to Historic Greenwich and a quick rest at the newly rebuilt Cutty Stark where the sheer magnitude of this vessel had **LCpl 'Caz' Langley** throwing herself upon the floor to worship it – she claimed she tripped. Continuing to the Woolwich Ferry some six miles later saw the next rest stop by the ever-popular roadside café for a bacon sandwich– damm shut! back-up plan, cold rat pack. Surprisingly **Maj Keith Wrate** had to depart the team for a very important meeting at the Inns of Court (I am sure the tracking device in the minibus will show a visit to McDonalds!!!!), but not to be defeated with the loss of such an important officer, the team had **Maj Sean Wardle** to follow, (yep - all comments by post please) and off the team went heading south along the path passing the Thames Barrier before the long up hill slog out from the Thames Path back to the ARC at Bexleyheath.



The team crossing Tower Bridge at "sparrows"

March, the Met office forecast rain till 0300, we got rain till 0300, good so far. By 0430 the team was fed and watered and heading off on the first of two 25 mile routes around South East London. Saturday saw the route head east to start, with **LCpl Langley** and **LCpl Andy Turner** leading the way, both determined to out pace each other and trying to set a new record for speed marching, arriving at the first check point only a few minutes after the support team! The route then headed south to Queen Mary's Hospital in Sidcup for our first rest point. The hospital team had made sure the toilets and a water point were opened for us at a very early hour. The rest of Saturday saw the team head through both urban and rural terrain following winding paths to Dartford and then an almost straight route back via Crayford and uphill to the ARC in Bexleyheath.

Sunday was an urban route, marching out through Old Bexley to Orpington. The 0430 start gave us plenty of time to progress to the first checkpoint before any of the local population stirred, where **Sgt Jase Bontoft** was talking to the organisers of the local car boot fare, they start really early in SE London!!! Princess Royal Hospital saw our next rest area, where again facilities were open to us. This gave the team a good rest before making its way to Chislehurst and the steepest and longest hill of the two days. **Cpl Jim Sutton** explained how the best option was to attack the hill full on and "just get up it, full pelt". Called forward – **Cpl Sutton**, front and centre, right off you go, we will follow-ish!". Silence, followed by a look of shock/horror, the rest is now history and only for him to tell. The route headed back to the ARC Bexleyheath, completing the 25 miles with only sore muscles and a few blisters ready for the next challenge on our route to Holland, RAF Cosford and the WARMA Marches in April.



The team "enjoying the day" led by Maj Sean Wardle



Team Medic Course - by Maj Sean Wardle

February saw the Squadron host two Team Medic courses held by the Regiment. The courses started with a bang, not Bat Sym but thunder and the rain fell for the duration of the two courses. Some 34 students were put through medical training, but not before the flooding (Op PITCHPOLE) saw 7 students mobilised on day one and two of the courses.

During the course the students were given lectures and exercises to practice what they had been taught. For some who had had experience in Afghanistan, the equipment was not new, for others, this was the first time they had used haemostatic agents and suction equipment.

The course commenced with lectures on mechanism of injury and catastrophic bleeding before the first of the practical session involving the use of the CAT. This had **Maj 'Bunny' Bunaventura** (256 Fd Hspl) leading teams of two students, kitted up and running to their casualties and having to stop the bleeding. Over the period of the two courses this stand alone used almost 40 litres of fake blood!

Both courses followed very similar pattern of lectures and practical exercises. The students were taught how to assess the airway, breathing and circulation, how to deal with an airway obstruction, how to use the emergency bandage in different situations, bleeding, dealing with environmental injuries, casualty evacuation drills as well as basic life support. The course was supported by a number of Medical and BCD instructors from across 71 Y Sig Regt, **Maj Sean Wardle** (Nursing Officer), **SSgt Tony Eastley** (Paramedic), **SSgt 'Shacks' Shackleton** (BCD Instructor), **Cpl 'Dev' Devine** (CMT

1), **Cpl Langley** and **Cpl Bob Myers** (BCD Instructors) and **Maj Bunaventura** (Nursing Officer) from 256 Field Hospital.

One of the most popular stands with the students was the triage stand. A pitch black room was strewn with obstacles and a number of casualties. In pairs and with only a head torch for light, they had two minutes to search the area and treat/triage the casualties they found before reporting back on what they had discovered. Overall both courses were well received with positive feedback and some good comments on possible improvements for future training.



Dealing with a Catastrophic Bleed under the watchful eye of Cpl Langley from 47 Sig Sq

56 SIGNAL SQUADRON, EASTBOURNE ARMY RESERVE CENTRE

56 Signal Squadron is to disband on 1 July 2014. Personnel who have made presentations to the Squadron are asked to reclaim items or give notice of their disposal wishes by e-mailing or writing to:

Capt GA Jennion (PSAO)

E-mail: 39SR-56-PSAO@mod.uk

Address:

56 Signal Squadron
39 Signal Regiment
Army Reserve Centre
Seaside
EASTBOURNE
East Sussex
BN22 7NL



NEWS FROM SQUADRONS



7 ARMoured BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND SIGNAL SQUADRON (207) BERGEN - HOHNE



OC
OC ROG
RSM

Maj J Davies
Capt G Middleton
WO1 (RSM) S Wedge

The Sqn that remains in Hohne still find themselves running at a hundred miles an hour as we support a number of exercises and we prepare to take on Op BANIAN which should prove to be an excellent opportunity for our soldiers. We are now starting to see the first of our Squadron return from Op HERRICK 19; with the return process starting in early March and ending in mid June. We look forward to getting all of our soldiers back and we are now beginning to focus on what we are calling the Summer silly season with medals parades, marches on the Houses of Parliament and an MXS in Sandhurst to keep us occupied, as well as preparing to return to our armoured background with a number of Bull Dog courses being run to ensure that when we eventually get to Stafford we can take on the commitment.

Exercise OLIVE GROVE - by Sig Croxon

In the early hours of 15 February myself and **Cpl 'Ollie' Tuite** deployed to Jordan with A Company 4 SCOTS. As the weather always does when a bunch of Jocks go to a hot country, the heavens opened and we got torrential rain for the first two days.

For the first couple of days we provided safety comms for the Company and apart from badly placed radios in the field all went smoothly. On the first rest day we went out on a comms recce for the second phase of training and a bit of "hill walking". After we hit the peak and **Cpl Tuite** decided the route down the hill, which was nearly vertical, walking turned into rock climbing.

With the start of the second phase of the exercise and a second mast going up for an enemy net, the safety comms started again along with radio serials with the exercising troops mixed up with a bit of PT in the heat. With dodgy VP (my favourite being "That's us finished firing mate), incomplete MISTATS and a lack of 9 liners we struggled through the next 9 days of safety comms.

After this, with shopping list in hand, I headed down to Aqaba to find some copper wire for remoting radios. After a long hunt and a bit of haggling I had my copper wire and it was time to prep kit for my combat camping. The next day, with my copper wire, my bergen, and my spare batteries I headed out to the field to live in the Company harbour area and await them finishing their insertion tab. As with any good plan, mine got screwed up. Instead of using my wonderfully built and laid copper wire I was sent up the mountains to live and act as a relay station. As I viewed the world from on high with only my thoughts, the local goat herder and a very lost Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF) patrol to amuse me, I relayed messages, tried to catch a pet lizard, and freaked out the sentries. Two days later I got the message to make my way down and join the (slightly more) civilized world below and travel back to camp as the final attack took place.

With the exercise over we settled in for a few days of rest and

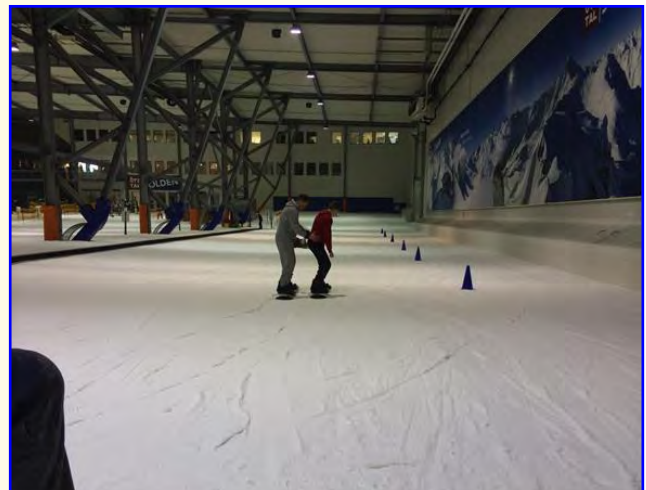
relaxation which started with moving from one piece of desert to another piece of desert called Wadi Rum (which, unfortunately wasn't full of rum). We got a tour of the local area on the back of the pick-up and got to meet a few of the locals. While we were doing this eight Highlanders decided to go off without permission to Aqaba and are now referred to in hushed tones as the "Aqaba Eight". The next day we were bussed down to "the rose-red city half as old as time", Petra, to spend a day getting a bit more cultured. Walking along the mile long canyon called "The Siq" or shaft which opened out into the ancient city, we were greeted by the nearly 2000 year old "Al Khazneh" or Treasury. We spent the day exploring Petra and getting hassled by the local sales people. Afterwards we were bussed back to camp ready to fly out that night. On our flight back we stopped over in Istanbul, Turkey. As we taxied off someone raised the question "why is our luggage on that baggage cart?" Hope you've got your luggage back **Cpl Tuite!**

Bispingham Snow Dome - by Sgt B Hickey

SSgt Harris generously organised a sports afternoon trip to Bispingham snow dome in preparation for the Squadron's AT event to Oberstdorf in Bavaria, Ex RED RAT SNOW POWDER. Unfortunately, due to working commitments **SSgt Harris** could not attend but **Sgt Hickey** gladly took the reins and deployed in eager anticipation of an afternoon's skiing.

On arrival we rented the required equipment and hit the slopes in earnest. It quickly became apparent that some of us, **Sig Cuffe**, clearly had no fear and very little skill. Others, **LCpl Drury** and **Lt Painter**, started a little rusty but quickly developed into the next 'Eddie the Eagle' and hit the big slopes at some speeds.

Cfn August point blank refused to ski and rented a more fashionable snow board. Donned in his uber protective jogging suit he showed the rest how it is done, which attracted the interest of the rest of the group who jumped ship and grabbed the boards. **Cfn August** gave some expert



Cfn August expertly guides Sig Cuffe into the correct position



tuition and the lads became the image of 'Shaun White'. Most improved undoubtedly went to **LCpl Drury**.

Our only non Skier was **Sig Mountain**. He put on his equipment and was tentatively coached by **Cpl Jones** throughout the afternoon's session. Within the hour **Sig Mountain** was attacking the 'baby' slopes furiously and even ventured onto the bigger slope later on, ridiculed by **Sig Crouch** all the way down.

A good afternoon was had by all; many thanks go to **SSgt Harris** for organising the event.

Welfare – by *LCpl Andy Kenyon*

Over the last few months we have had lots going on in the Welfare Centre including a trip out to Elfenland for the families, which all enjoyed.

We have finally managed to prize **Cpl Mal Barron** out of the Welfare Centre and back into troop life, we thank him for all his help since his arrival,

With **Cpl Barron** gone we welcome **Cpl Lib Elgumaty** to the team as he takes over the vacated role.

A member of our Welfare team, **Sig Smith**, also had some great news this month with the arrival of baby **Charlie**. From all in the Welfare team we wish him and his wife **Laura** all the very best for the future and we hope he enjoys his 2 weeks of paternity leave. Coming up very soon we have what will be the last family outing to Serengeti Park, this should be a great day out for all.

Exercise RED RAT REFRESHER - by *LCpl Yarrick*

Ex RED RAT REFRESHER was a 3 day exercise for all those that will be on their PNCO or their JCLM in the near future. This exercise consisted of remind and revise lessons on all aspects on Command Leadership and Management.

The course started on Monday 24 February. On the first day we had a PFA and a Values & Standards lesson. **2Lt Painter** was the instructor for the Values & Standards lesson. Whilst on this lesson we had a good discussion on how some of the Core Values contradict each other and in the end we all agreed that without all 6 they wouldn't work. After that "fun" lesson and lunch we started back in the classroom ready to give our presentations, on a subject of our choosing and evaluated by **RSM Wedge**. Some presentations like **Sig Hunters** Texas Holdem poker and **Sig Foster's** how to make an aeroplane were quite fun and interesting. We then had some presentations like **Cpl Hancock's** fire extinguisher presentation which bored everyone, but on the plus side the whole Squadron received their yearly Unit Fire Awareness lesson and the tick in the box. We also found our new Fire NCO (hint hint). The purpose of this presentation exercise was to give us more confidence when speaking to a large audience and also making sure our presentations were bang on for our PNCO course.

On the Tuesday we had a quick kit inspection. With no major dramas we went to collect our weapons and started to get ready for the exercise phase. We deployed to the Instaberg Training Area just round the back of camp. Once we entered our location for the day we got out the TCV where **Cpl Muhl** was waiting for us to give revision lessons on the 6 section battle drills and fire control orders. To his surprise; we were quite knowledgeable on these aspects. After these lessons we got issued our ration packs, PRRs and blank ammunition. Once we had finished with our lunch **SSgt Hemming** was waiting, ready to give us lessons on pair's fire manoeuvre and section attacks. After the lessons we had to practise what we

had just been taught. During this phase we kept swapping the section commanders and the 2IC around to make sure everyone had a command appointment. After about 3½ hours (which felt like ½ hour for me) we finally finished.

Our next lesson was on harbour drills and duties of a sentry from **Sgt Hickey**. Once we finished the lesson we jumped in the TCV to drive to a different location. Once we were at our new location we set up our ponchos and started to sort out our admin in the field. This phase of the exercise was to make sure all our kit worked properly and to make sure we could admin ourselves whilst in the field. During the night, we had to supply a roaming sentry since we were only a section. In the morning bright and early we had a kit inspection on our rifle and other bits of kit from **SSgt Hemming**. After we got given some press ups for a few minor details that we missed on our rifle it was time to jump back in the TCV and go back to our first location.

Back in our first location it was back to section attacks for 2 reasons, the first one was to make sure our skills and drills are good and also to use what's left of the ammunition. Just before the section attacks we were given a lesson on the L11 Practice grenade. This was a very good lesson from **Sgt Hickey**. We continued to do the attacks until lunchtime where we finally went back on the TCV to camp to clean our weapons and to finish exercise. Overall this exercise was very well organised and we all learnt a lot.

SUPPORT TO RMAS Exercise DYNAMIC VICTORY

– by *Sigs Cuffe and Crouch*

Exercise DYNAMIC VICTORY is the confirmation exercise for the final term of Officer Cadets (OCdts) attending the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) before they are commissioned. On this particular occasion it was being held in the Grafenwoehr Training Area (GTA) and Hoehenfels Training Area (HTA), Germany. 207 Signal Squadron was given the task to provide transport for the exercise, whether it was from range to range or to various different training locations.

The vehicles used were 6 tonne MAN SV/TCV, each of which can hold up to 14 passengers in the back and 2 passengers in the front, for those lucky few in the front get a smooth ride from A to B. The week prior to the exercise saw scrupulous amounts of preparation of the vehicles, making them ready to deploy on 6 March.

At 1300hrs it was all go for the 3 hour drive to Sennelager for an overnight stay before meeting up with members of 44 Squadron (RMAS Support Squadron). Less than 30 minutes into the drive and on the range road, **Sig Jones-Ramirez** and **Sig Mountains** vehicle was somehow already missing from the convoy (just after a red campervan). Eventually though we did all make it safely to Sennelager. The following evening we all departed as one big happy convoy on the 8 hour drive to GTA.

Mid day on 8 March the bright eyed and fresh faced OCdts arrived, as eager to get out on the area as we were to leave it.

The first week consisted of mainly driving to the American PX and Burger King, with the occasional nuisance of dropping the OCdts off at the ranges.

On our second week we deployed to a FOB location in HTA, where we had the joys of living next to an American construction site. Our colonial neighbours from the US National Guard were more than keen to trade a bit of kit, resulting in **Sig Mason** trading half of his 1157 for a complete set of American uniform.

All the tasking orders for the second week were to be



orchestrated by the OCdts themselves. This resulted in every pickup/drop off being in exactly the right place at exactly the right time, and with absolutely nobody getting lost, and certainly not once did they task 8xTCVs to pick up a single Bergen...It was actually twice.

Finally, after a visit from a 2 star general to give his final approval of his new fledgling officers the exercise, thankfully, came to an end. Just a 9 hour drive back to the safety of Hohne, and even managing to make it back in time for Friday night.

Exercise RED RAT ROLLING ROAD – by Sig McDowell

Exercise RED RAT ROLLING ROAD was an educational visit to the Volkswagen Auto Stadt. This included the forced labour camp used during the Second World War. This highlighted the cruelty of the Nazi regime and also the affect that the British Army has achieved in this area.

On 12 Feb 14, 207 Signal Squadron took time out of their busy ROG duties to partake in a cultural and educational tour of the Volkswagen Autostadt. This included going back in time and exploring the forced labour camp which is under the factory, also having the opportunity to see the production line watching the cars getting built from start to finish.

In true Royal Signals style we started the day off being stuck at the front gate, even with our amazing German linguistic skills. This included **Sgt Taits** best efforts with his pigeon German. Eventually we were able to get in and start our first tour which was the forced labour camp. It was shocking to see how the prisoners had been treated and the appalling

conditions they worked and lived in.

The next three tours took us round the factory to watch the cars being constructed from scratch, to a tour of the museum and the rest of the Autostadt. The tour concluded with the famous towers where you can see the cars being delivered using a device like a big vending machine. Almost everyone was willing to go up in the tower, however due to his fear of heights **SSgt (FofS) Trott** kindly volunteered to look after the tables and drinks at the bar.

After the main tour we explored all the other parts of the Autostadt seeing some of the amazing technology. This included the jaw dropping looks of the chrome Bugatti Vayron. From there we went on to enjoy an evening meal with a few beers to round off a long day and to work out if we could afford the new Porsche, tax free. **Sig Foster** got plenty of poses in as many expensive cars as he could, no doubt they will appear on Facebook captioned "Look at my new car girls". It's nice to dream.

Long Service And Good Conduct Medal Parade

On Mon 31 Mar 14, four members of 207 Signal Squadron received their LS&GC. They were **SSgt Caplis** REME, **Sgt Clegg** RLC, **Cpl Brogan** and **LCpl Rai** RLC. The event was held in the WOs' & Sgts' Mess in Hohne, where the citations were read by **Lt Painter** with the OC/COS (Rear) presenting the medals to the soldiers and flowers to their partners. The achievement of receiving the LS&GC is a huge milestone in a soldiers career and all were congratulated on their excellent performance and commitment leading to its award.

CORPS OFFICERS' LUNCH - CATTERICK 7 SEPTEMBER 2014

It is with regret and disappointment that I must inform you all that despite the recent advert in the Association and Retired Officers' Newsletter regarding the 2014 Lunch at Catterick on 7 September, we have unfortunately had to cancel this years gathering.

The reason for doing so is out of our control and is due to a major refurbishment of the Infantry Training Centre (ITC) Mess in Vimy Barracks, the previous home of our Corps Officers. Having consulted at several levels, including local to the Catterick area, it was felt inappropriate to consider another venue which would clearly not offer the same level of poignancy.

Corps Officers' Lunch 2015. The President of the Officers' Dinner Club, Brigadier J E Richardson is clear in his intent to hold, and furthermore reinvigorate, the lunch next year given that the 2015 lunch will mark the 21st Anniversary of the Corps' departure from Catterick, in fact the date has already been set and is Sunday 6 September 2015.

On behalf of the dinner club president I do hope that you understand the difficult decision that we have had to make and look forward to seeing you all again in 2015.

T W Canham
Col (Retd)
Regt Sec



OTHER UNITS



HEADQUARTERS BRITISH FORCES SOUTH ATLANTIC ISLANDS - J6



ACOS J6 **Sqn Ldr Richard Coles** RAF
SO3 J6 **Capt (Tfc) Clarke Fatchett**
YofS **SSgt (YofS) Adam Philpotts**

- by *LCpl Davison*

Introduction

British Forces South Atlantic Islands BFAI (Falklands) is a Joint and integrated command formed of personnel from all three services charged with delivering a very real operational effect; the deterrence of any aggression towards the South Atlantic Islands and reassurance to the local population.

RADCON is the Tactical Communication section and are responsible for the provision of secure and insecure tactical reach back communications enabling Command and Control to support HQ BFAI activities. These communications take the form of rapidly deployable Immediate Response Operators (IRO) and Bowman FFR vehicles known as Crash-Out Detachments (COD).

Exercise/Activities

Ex CAPE BAYONET 01/14 took place from 3 - 7 Feb 14 on the Onion Range Training Area. This was the final exercise for the Roulement Infantry Coy (RIC) who were the 1st Company, 1st Battalion Welsh Guards. **LCpl 'Dicko' Dickson** deployed with a Crash Out Detachment (COD) with three other crew who were: **Sig Nath 'Fire-man' Crowe**, **LCpl 'Robbo-PTI' Robertson** and **LCpl 'AJ' Arjun**.



LCpl Arjun working on BV vehicle providing comms for the Range Safety Officer

The COD team set up a Range Safety Ops Room with reach-back BOWMAN HF communications from Onion Range to the Joint Operational Command (JOC) Cell in Mount Pleasant Complex (MPC), providing the 'Safety Net' for the Range Control. Also, local VHF ICOM radio net, BOWMAN HF net and data were provided on the ground for the Range Safety Officer. ABV (amphibious assault) vehicle operator was provided as a signaller for the Range Safety Officer (RSO).

Capt (Tfc) Clarke Fatchett accompanied by **Sgt 'D' Dipak**, paid a visit to the RADCON personnel involved in the exercise to get first hand feel of the work and equipment in use, especially the BOWMAN Modular Deployable Ops Room (MDOR) used in the RIC Ops room. As part of the visit he was able to follow the Fire Support Group (FSG) during the Coy attack which was supported by mortar fire. The weather did not disappoint with **Capt Fatchett** leaving the range soaked to the skin!

High Readiness Taskings

In the very same week, real time support was required at one of the remote locations by the IRO and another COD got crashed out to the incident some 153 kilometres away as the crow flies. **LCpl 'Rosie' Rose** (2IC RADCON) had a hell of a time (in the absence of **Sgt Dipak** who was on visit to Onion Range with the boss) with his limited man-power in sorting out the deployments of the IRO and the COD on heli-flight and ferry to West Falkland.

Long distance HF comms back to MPC were provided by the RADCON crew to the incident commander and local ICOM VHF radio net at the incident site in difficult conditions.

Recreational Activities

On 22 Feb 14, RADCON were invited to a fun day of "paintballing" with ISS (our fellow signallers) who organised the event. The day consisted of two team matches and two free for all matches. The first two teams chosen to compete via drawing names from a hat, were inevitably both RADCON teams, 'Yoda and the gang' and 'Gurkha Elite', with white Gurkha **Sig Ross 'Eardrums' McLlelan**. In preparation for the match both teams were talking tactics with words such as cover, suppression and aggression being used left right and centre. In the end all talk of tactics went out the window for Yoda and the gang during the match with **LCpl Jason 'The Hat' Rose** cutting his own detail and throwing shapes, charging in on his lonesome "Rambo" feats, and 'Gurkha Elite' responding with lots of paintballs and inevitable victory. After the match lots of words were thrown around such as 'cheaters' in the battle bus viewing area, whilst watching the ISS teams compete. The free for all matches for RADCON personnel became a re-match due to disagreement, and so both teams embarked once again on the battlefield with **SSgt Adam 'Yoda' Phillpotts** giving some inspiring words and battle tactics to the team. Likewise **Sgt Dipak 'Master Gurkha' Gurung** was conjuring up his own sneaky tactics. The final outcome of the match was a victory to 'Yoda and the gang', making an even score of 1-1 which is still being discussed to this day. Although RADCON never met ISS on the battlefield, both gained many a bruise and cut having fun.

Welcomes and Farewells

This month, we welcome **Cpl 'Wiggi' Wignall** and **Sig Ross McLlelan** from 14 Sig Regt and **LCpl 'G' Gurung** from 10 Sig Regt. On the other hand, we said farewell to **LCpl 'Dicko' Dickson**, **Sig 'Fire-man' Crowe** and **Sig Kieran Johnstone** with home-cooked mega spicy curry in RADCON.



UK MOD SANGCOM PROJECT TEAM



Project Director **Brig Tim Watts OBE**

Farewell to Major Carl Shead MBE – by Capt Jim Boyden

Finally we saw a very sad day in the SANGCOM calendar. After 37 years loyal, valuable and arguably “fabulous” service, **Maj Carl Shead MBE** was dined out from SANGCOM and sadly, out of the Army on completion of his service.

And so it came to pass that on a cool (for Saudi Arabia!) Friday morning, the Team formed up at the SANGCOM Operations Continuity Centre, which for the purposes of the day had been converted into the Mess to say farewell to a much loved Officer. In the weeks leading up to the event, **WO1 (YofS) Gaz Woolley MBE** ably demonstrated why he has been selected for LE Commissioning by organizing a superb brunch for over 80 guests and using his intelligence gathering skills to find any dirt on **Maj Shead** for the traditional leaving speech.



Col John Adams recaps Carl's “fabulous” service”

After a fantastic brunch, **Col John Adams** then kicked off the speeches by recapping **Maj Shead's** sterling service, **Carl** having joined when Centurion was a rank, not a tank, when the POL point was merely a haystack and of course there was no need for ID cards because they all knew each other anyway (insert your favorite long service joke here).



Maj Carl Shead MBE being brunchted out in style!

Messages from friends both serving and retired were read out by the military contingent and there was the lovely touch of a presentation from his children, who sadly couldn't join us for such an auspicious occasion.

Maj Shead has now left SANGCOM for pastures new – in whichever endeavor he finds himself in the future, we wish him all the best for his second career. *Certa Cito!*

Exercise LOYALTY AND SACRIFICE 4

The end of the year saw the Saudi Arabian National Guard deploy on Ex LOYALTY AND SACRIFICE 4, under the command of His Royal Highness Prince Miteb bin Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, Minister of the National Guard. As the Liaison Officer to the Field Force Signal Battalion, **Capt Jim Boyden** was granted the rare privilege to observe the proceedings and sample Arabic life on exercise. With several VVIPs present, the National Guard briefed His Royal Highness Prince Miteb bin Abdullah bin Abdulaziz on the capabilities of some new vehicles after which His Royal Highness paid a visit to the Operations Centre of the exercise and the Force Duty Centre.



At the end of his tour Prince Miteb bin Abdullah bin Abdulaziz stated he was delighted with what he saw of the readiness of the National Guard troops participating in the exercise, which represents an important addition to the capabilities and skills of the participants



The Liaison Officer sampling his ten thousandth cup of Arabic coffee





One for all the old a bold – the entrance to the Range Area featuring a pair of antique rifles

A Requirement Manager's perspective on SANGCOM

– by Maj Scott Steven

SANGCOM are now heavily engrossed in the delivery of a Kingdom wide IP Service spanning the width of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Daily planning meetings with numerous vendors and the Prime Contractor, we ensure what is delivered is fit for purpose, enables the longevity of a communications platform and is capable of dealing with the technologies of today and tomorrow.

SANGCOM are in the process of delivering in excess of 50,000 miles of fibre which form the physical medium over which a Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing layer will be presented. This will enable a robust and reliable Multiprotocol Label Switching (MPLS) core network to host a resilient and assured Service orientated platform. The complexities involved in this should not be underestimated, but what comes with those challenges is very much a sound feeling of job satisfaction. For those who thrive on such challenges then SANGCOM is the place to come as this element of the project extends up to 2020. Being deeply involved in the design process of such a capability brings a smile to the face, evident through the enthusiasm of **WO1 (FoS) Dave Wood and WO1(FoS) Ian McKenna** beavering away as part of the Network Assurance Authority. The IP Network is only one deliverable in a vast and spanning programme being managed by SANGCOM

For all of these to be successful, we rely heavily on the Requirement phases where **Maj Mark West** delivers on the fixed element of the Information Communications Services portfolio and **Maj Colin Kell** on the deployable element. Between them they are developing requirements for a plethora of communications projects which includes: mobile and fixed satellite capability, meshed microwave networks, tropo-scatter and more traditional deployable capability in the form HF,VHF,UHF radios. No other single project team of similar size delivers in the scale, complexity and breadth of communications capabilities. If you want a technical challenge, exposure to and deliver the full spectrum of communications, work in a unique cultural and physical environment, where every day is a sunny day, then the SANGCOM project team is for you.

And of course all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. We are now at the end of the camping season which has spanned from Sep through to Apr. We have had experiences of a lifetime; the trip down to the south and west of Saudi has etched some great memories of spectacular landscapes, ancient buildings with the highlight of that trip being the hospitality given to us by some good Saudi friends and probably more so, the total strangers who treated us like family on what was their equivalent to a festive day. During another longer trip, we visited Oman, where at one point we

were weaving our way through the mountains in the morning and then the sand dunes of Wahiba Desert in the afternoon, and to cap it all off, we camped at the edge of the desert right next to the sea. Again some spectacular sights, wonderful experiences and great times. The trips in and around Riyadh have been numerous with delights such as Petroglyph Valley, (ancient carvings on rock faces), finding sharks teeth (yes in the middle of the desert) and the ultimate, flint arrowheads from thousands of years ago. All in all, an absolutely fantastic season and one we are looking forward to starting again in Sept.



Image from Petroglyph Valley



Scaling Down Whale Rock in our 4X4. Scary

SANGCOM is very much a place where we work hard and play hard and offers a great lifestyle with excellent job satisfaction.



Examples of the Arrowheads we find





BRUNEI SIGNAL TROOP



Exercise YOUNG TIGER - by LCpl Ramesh

Exercise YOUNG TIGER was a Brunei Signals Troop (BST) diving expedition organised by **Cpl Bikash** under direction of OC BST, **Capt Shankar**, to Puerto Galera, Philippines over the period 8 - 14 December 2013. It was designed to enhance the strong existing team bonding and cohesion among members of BST, and also to explore underwater environment. Ten members from BST and two members from the QOGLR detachment were deployed.

On 8 Dec 13, after months of preparation and waiting, all expedition members departed to Manila from Brunei full of enthusiasm and excitement. At Manila airport we came out of the immigration desks with no trouble whatsoever and met two drivers with vans at the airport car park. We got ourselves into the vans and after a 2 hour drive arrived at the port where we took a ferry for our final destination. After an hour of journey in the ferry we finally arrived to the resort where the staff were eagerly waiting to receive us. Once checked in we were served with complementary drinks and Mr John, the co-owner of the resort briefed us about the resort, general area, course package and timings etc. After a few drinks, everybody had a good meal and settled for a good sleep after the long journey.

quickly ran through the programme and issued us course materials for personal study. We watched a few video clips regarding the safety drills whilst diving and then got ready for the initial swimming test which was 200m swimming in any stroke and 10 minutes floating in the sea. Gladly we all passed the test which we found easier than expected; even some weak swimmers had no trouble at all. After the test we were divided into two groups; one group started with classroom phase and another group in the swimming pool practicing various drills.

The next day was an exciting moment for us because we were almost ready to go into the sea with dive kit on for the first time. For three consecutive days, we had theory as well as practical lessons in the pool before taking a dive into the sea applying all the knowledge and skill that instructors taught us. The diving instructors were very experienced, professional and friendly. Because they all came from military backgrounds, we instantly got on well with everything they did for us. While diving we were fortunate to see colourful reefs, corals and marine life underwater which were the most exhilarating moments for us. The course kept us busy during the day, however **Sgt Sudesh** managed to arrange a visit to the white beach which was another attraction in Puerto Galera.



Next morning we were seated in the classroom. John introduced us to Baz, Marcus and Krish, who were our instructors throughout the course. Baz then took charge and

On the last day of our course we took a written exam in the morning, which we all passed with flying colours, followed by the recreational dive in the afternoon. At the end of the day we all were awarded and certified as basic Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) open water divers. We all had a fantastic and thoroughly enjoyable expedition; a nice blend of hard training as well as opportunities for social time. We were very glad to return to Brunei with our new found skill. As we were leaving everybody was looking determined to return to the resort one day for the Advance Diver's Course.

JAI BRUNEI SIGNAL TROOP!



ROYAL CORPS OF SIGNALS ORIENTEERING CHAMPIONSHIPS

2 - 3 APRIL

The BFG Orienteering Championships were held in British Forces Germany over the 2 - 3 Apr 14. Organised by **WO2 (FofS) 'Mally' Mallinson** from 15 Sig Regt, the two day event attracted over 100 runners from around the Corps including the Chairman for Royal Signals Orienteering, **Col Matt Fensom**, **The Corps Colonel** and **The Corps RSM**.

The weather was glorious from the offset and we saw temperatures over 25°C on both days, needless to say the fair haired orienteers were donning the suncream!

Grizzly Creek Training Area was used for the individual event. The area consisted of mainly runnable forest, which was dissected by a steep ridge that we all climbed at least twice! There were areas of intricate detail that managed to catch a few runners out early on. The long leg towards the end of the female course certainly tested one's stamina and route selection whilst in oxygen debt!

The red course for novices and under 25s challenged all who entered and with the Corps Colonel and CRSM competing in this category, the gauntlet had been laid! The CRSM set off at pace, only to be caught by the Corps Colonel at the first few controls due the accurate navigation skills of **Colonel Graham**; the tortoise and the hare sprang to mind! As the CRSM settled he ran well and collected all the check points. Unfortunately, he did not know they must be collected in order and was disqualified allowing the Corps Colonel the opportunity to plod his way to victory!!

The novice winner was **Sig Cooper** from 1DSR in a time of 40:14, which was very respectable for a novice. Runner up was **Sig Prakash** from 2 Sig Regt in 43:01. We look forward to seeing these guys, and all the other novices, develop over the coming months.

The brown course was highly competitive with several Corps runners in contention for the Open trophy. After an extremely hard and fast run, **SSgt Jamie Ranson** retained the Men's Open title for the seventh year with a winning time of 1:04:40. Other great performances came from **WO1 (FofS) Stevie Read**, **Sgt Andy McNally** and **Capt 'Dobbo' Dobson**, who is on his comeback to orienteering!! Condolences go to **Cpl 'Chatti' Ijam** who did not manage to beat **Sgt Lewis Wright** this time

The blue/female course also saw some strong competition. **Maj Sally Calland** also managed to retain the Women's Open title for a second year with a time of 1:08:24 despite some good runs from **Capt Kirsty Davies-Walters**, **Maj Hannah Frost** and **Cpl Chrissie Riddell**, who also won their age categories. **Col Fensom** ran a respectable race considering he had not orienteered for over 5 years.

The team relays were held close to Sennelager Camp on Inkerman training area. Fourteen Royal Signals teams took part making the competition fierce.

Again the weather was beyond stunning, but made for tough running. **SSgt Colin Holcombe** briefed all the novices on the format of a Harris relay that sees teams of 3 having to collect dozens of controls between them.



WO2 (FofS) 'Mally' Mallinson



M45 Winner WOI Welsh



M40 R/Up Lt Col Eric Heritage



M40 Winner Maj Simon Ing



M35 Winner Sgt Andy McNally



Sgt Wright 'checking in'



Mens' Open Champion Sgt Jamie Ranson



SIGNALS INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONSHIPS 2014

APRIL 2014

- by Maj Sally Calland

Winners were:



3DSR team winners

Major Unit Winners – 3DSR
 Major Unit runners up – 11 Sig Regt
 Minor Unit Winners – HQ Spt Comd
 Ladies Champions – 2 Sig Regt
 Adhoc Winners – Lt Col Eric Heritage, Maj Sally Calland and Sgt Andy McNally
 Novice Winners – 2 Sig Regt

The Champs were a huge success and has identified some talent for the future. The Corps Team competes at Combined Services level regularly and is always looking for new runners to develop.



11 Sig Regt team runners up

Brown (Mens Open) 8.9 km, 150m climb

SSgt Ranson - 3 DSR - Mens' Open Champion
 Sgt McNally - JFC ISS - M35 Winner
 WO1 Read - 3 DSR - M35 Runner Up
 SSgt Powell - 16 Sig Regt - M21 Winner
 Sgt Wright - 11 Sig Regt - M21 Runner Up
 Maj Ing - 22 Sig Regt - M40 Winner
 Lt Col Heritage - HQ NWD - M40 Runner Up

Blue (Ladies Open) 7.0 km, 120m climb

Maj Calland - HQ R SIGNALS - Ladies Open Champion
 WO1 Welch - HQ Sup Comd - M45+ Winner
 Capt Davies Walters - 2 Sig Regt - W21 Winner
 Cpl Riddell - 16 Sig Regt - W21 Runner Up
 Capt Brooker - 16 Sig Regt - M45+ Runner Up
 Maj Frost - 22 Sig Regt - W35 Winner

Red (U25/Novice) 4.8 km

Sig Cooper - 1 UK ADSR - MU25 Winner
 Sig Prakash - 2 Sig Regt - MU25 Runner Up
 LCpl Thapa - 11 Sig Regt - Novice Winner



2 Sig Regt Women's team winners



Womens Open Champion Maj Sally Calland



M21 R/Up Sgt Lewis Wright



Female Novice winner
 LCpl Jade Forknall



WU25 Winner LCpl Lyons-Negus



WU25 R/Up Sig Harris

The next Corps Orienteering Training Camp (Exercise MERCURY COMPASS 9) will be held in the Lake District over 2 - 8 Aug 14. There are spaces available for individuals to participate. Any interested personnel should contact **Maj Sally Calland** on 94371 2168 or send me an email on DII. We also have a Facebook page: 'Royal Signals Orienteering'.



Adhoc team winners
 'The Young Ones'



ADVENTUROUS TRAINING

EXERCISE FROZEN FELIX

5 - 11 MAR 2014

by Sgt J Wright

In early March, 33 members of 11 EOD Regt, led by 521 EOD Sqn stood down from MACP UK duties and departed Catterick Garrison for the sleepy hamlet of Günzesreid-Sage, Bavaria, for a week of alpine skiing in the beautiful, mountainous and the significantly sunnier scenery of the Allgäu.

Based out of the beautiful REME Lodge, we were magnificently hosted and ate like kings. Not even the infamous 'shot shack' managed to wrong-foot the group - despite an animated evening, everyone emerged unscathed the following morning ready to get their teeth into another glorious blue-bird mountain day. Of course, the exercise did not pass off entirely without calamity! As the skiers gained in confidence and speed, so did the crashes. **Cpl Alex Clayton**, **LCpl Stevie Burgoyne** and **Maj Colin Whitworth** all became better acquainted with the snow pack in spectacular fashion.

At the end of a fantastic exercise, the party descended upon 'XXL' restaurant in Sonthofen. Whilst still awaiting its first Michelin star, this emporium of oversized food offered a fitting backdrop for the exercise awards ceremony. **Maj Colin Whitworth** made a number of presentations to our hosts and to the exercise instructors who performed well beyond the call of duty. Amid stiff competition, **LCpl Stephen Rae** took the top skier award, **LCpl Sophia Day** thoroughly



LCpl Kane Crawford's group stop to admire the scenery atop the Kanzelwandbahn



Exercise FROZEN FELIX complete at the end of the week

deserved the title of most improved and **Cpl Alex Clayton** (barely) walked away from his 70m black-run slide to capture the much coveted 'best face plant' gong. A huge amount was achieved, with 25 soldiers gaining the benchmark SF1 qualification – well done!

The skiing bug is definatly set within 521 EOD Sqn and there is already talk of next year.

A special thank you must go to the charities that made this exercise possible: the Felix Fund, the RLC Association Trust, the Royal Signals Association and not forgetting 11 EOD Regt COPF and PRI funds. Without the generosity of such organisations, personal contributions would be considerably higher. Equally, without our talented and extremely patient instructors, the exercise would simply not have been possible.



EXERCISE CARIBBEAN WINGS

23 FEB - 10 MAR 2014

by Lt Nathalie Keddie

Having driven to the Gatwick airport Hilton in the rain and got up in the cold I was bristling with excitement when I met the rest of the crew of Ex CARIBBEAN WINGS Leg 10 in February. We were an eclectic mix of individuals ready to fly to St Lucia in order to begin our 2 week voyage upon the HMSTC DISCOVERER, a Challenge 67 Sail Training Craft. This tri-service expedition sets sail from Gosport and travels to the Caribbean via the Canary Islands. The yacht remains there for the majority of the exercise before returning to British waters via St Thomas, Miami and New York.

Leg 10 was crewed by members of all three services with a vast range of sailing experience. Previously, I had completed the Competent Crew course at the JSASTC and had a week on board a yacht in the Mediterranean. The transition to sailing a much larger vessel, capable of crossing the most treacherous waters on the globe, was a learning curve the skipper and mate were excellent at catering for. I was taken to the limits of my ability and am now a much better yachtsman with valuable experience.

On the first day we were introduced to the boat and began our tuition in sailing terminology; a new and daunting tongue to some of the party. The training was progressive and our first passage, to Union Island, was a chance for us to put the theory into practice. We tacked and gybed successfully to Chatham Bay where we were instructed to drop the anchor and get comfortable for the night. However, no exercise is complete without a stag rota and anchor watch had to be staffed. It was here that the inter-service banter really kicked off; apparently it takes an AT package to educate the RAF that moving objects make poor reference points! As our sea legs grew more stable we began to increase the length of the passages. The longest was in excess of 150 nautical miles and took 24hrs to complete. Being split into watches meant that everyone had a role and getting into routine was essential. Sailing at night can be a dangerous pastime but it proved to be among the most enjoyable aspects of an excellent expedition. The blackness that surrounded the boat was absolute as we sailed across a rolling ocean that was entirely invisible, except for the trail of luminescence behind the yacht. On clear nights the stars were glorious and navigating by them was a pleasure. The Caribbean is breathtakingly beautiful and in daylight the clear blue waters meant swimming amongst beautifully coloured fish was a regular occurrence. We were able to swim with turtles and manta rays in the nature reserve of Tobago Quays in the Grenadines. It was a common hope that we would see dolphins whilst there but having them swim alongside the boat, jumping through the bow wave was more than we could have anticipated.

The overnight stops at different islands permitted us to explore them briefly, exposing us to the unique nature of each of them and their history. On some islands English was the primary language and East Caribbean dollars the currency, on others French and Euros were the norm. Some parts of these islands are only accessible by boat; we were afforded sights few are lucky enough to have experienced. An afternoon in Tobago quays meant we could taste the wonderful beach BBQ with all the local creole flavours and a stop in Antigua saw us moored up in Nelsons historic dockyard; a fantastic insight into the history of the British empire. We spent the evening at Shirley Heights, the historic artillery look out, which is now put to use for steel bands, local food and rum punch on a Saturday night. Our final stop before returning to St. Lucia was Dominica where we experienced a true assault to the senses; music and dancing everywhere with multicoloured costumes and BBQs in the street.

Having returned to St Lucia, the final day was spent conducting essential maintenance in the yacht before the next crew arrived.

The novices completed the final training objectives to achieve their competent crew qualification and the rest of us logged the miles we had completed in preparation for further sailing qualifications. Travel to the Caribbean is expensive and this exercise should be considered a unique opportunity to be grasped wholeheartedly. Grants are available from the Army Sports Lottery and numerous other sources to bring the cost down to a bargain price. I was fortunate to have received funding from the the Corps AT fund and paid less than £500 for this experience. I would like to express my thanks for the grant and a final encouragement to apply for a place on Exercise CARIBBEAN WINGS.



EXERCISE R

14 - 22 M

Phase 1 (Deployment) 14 - 15 Mar

All personnel paraded at Bramcote minus the three individuals that were being picked up en route and one who was meeting the group at the accommodation. The group loaded onto the coach, provided and driven by Ski-4-Less. The coach departed at 1530 14 Mar and arrived at the ferry port to cross the Channel at 1950.

Once across the Channel and into France, the group were able to pass the time by playing DVDs on the multiple screens on board. On arrival at the accommodation at 1530 15 Mar the OIC was informed that they would have to wait until 1700 until check in. This time was used to pick up the ski hire equipment, sort out ability groups and pick up ski passes. At 1700 the keys were released and all participants moved into their respective rooms. Once moved in the group met at the restaurant where dinner was provided as part of the half board deal, before receiving a brief for the first day's activity.

Phase 2 (Expedition) 16 - 21 Mar

At 0845 16 Mar the group reconvened ready for skiing. The ski passes were distributed and the participants were sent off under their instructors for the first day of lessons. The three lowest level groups, under the instruction of **SSgt Joyce**, **SSgt Hitchen** and **Cpl Allan**, went to the nursery slopes to learn the basics of skiing, including the fundamentals of balance, turning, ski placement and control. The intermediate groups, under instruction of **Sgt Lomax** and **Cpl Hughes**, went to a series of blue runs to assess how confident the members were and their level of skill fade. The two groups with more experience, instructed by **Capt Box** and **WO2 Petts**, worked to warm up their legs and get into the good habits learnt from SFL1 by exploring the east side of the mountain range and assessing routes to use later in the week. By the end of the day, everyone in beginner groups were skiing on the nursery slopes. The intermediate groups had begun to understand the level everyone was at and the advanced groups were warmed up and ready to face another five days skiing.

At 0845 17 Mar the teams met for the second day's skiing, to learn that six participants had been ill during the night and were too unwell to ski. The previous night's dinner was blamed by most, though the source of their illness was not determined. The teams started soon after and went straight from a warm up to a morning of tuition on the slopes. The beginner groups all stayed on the nearby green slopes, and the intermediate groups



Warming up



Suncream was vital to ensure no one got burnt



Capt Box giving a ski lesson on the slopes



LEGAL SWAN

MAR 2014

went higher up the mountain to build on their skills on more challenging routes. The experienced groups pushed themselves hard throughout the day, taking on black runs and mogul fields, and came off the mountain at the end of the day with very sore legs.

On day 3 the beginner group started with simple skills lessons and moved onto blue runs. Despite only having spent two days on skis, the group performed well, and made it down without too many problems. The intermediate groups all had lessons on carving, and skiing on their edges, and the experienced groups made further progress on their mogul crossing skills which was made more difficult by the slushy snow conditions.

On day 4 the beginner groups all attempted both blue and green runs, having lessons periodically throughout. The intermediate groups spent the morning wobbling around in balance lessons and applying their skills in the afternoon on learning how to ski off-piste and finishing the day on a short off-piste run. The experienced groups spent the morning between mogul runs and off-piste runs.

Day 5 began with a group photo and the groups all breaking away to consolidate the skills they had learnt with their instructors. In the afternoon the beginners skied blue run after blue run, the intermediate groups skied reds and off-piste, and the experienced groups skied mostly off-piste, coming back onto red runs to “ease off”.

Day 6 was the final day skiing, and was conducted as a skiing day without lessons. Throughout the day each group skied under their instructors for the morning, and met for lunch to catch up and eat together before heading out for a few more hours skiing in the afternoon.



Sig Kishan enjoying the view of the Alps

Phase 3 (Recovery) 21 – 22 Mar

After the last skier had come in off the piste, the group handed in their equipment, packed their kit and tidied their rooms. The rooms were checked by **SSgt Fitton** prior to handing them back over to the hotel, and the participants all headed into dinner together for a debrief on their skiing and briefing for the movement. At 2000 21 Mar the group loaded their kit onto the coach and waved goodbye to Val Thorens. The journey passed without event and at 1400 22 Mar the expedition had returned to Bramcote.



The Group Photo



EXERCISE NOR

2 - 24 FEB

Exercise NORTHERN GOKYO KEYS was a 2 Signal Regiment Level 3 High altitude trekking expedition to the Sagarmatha (Everest) National Park in Nepal over the period 2 – 24 Feb 14. The expedition, one of only fourteen HQ ATG (A) sponsored expeditions this year, would see a team of 14 personnel from the Unit set out to reach Everest Base Camp (EBC) (5364m) whilst also conducting ascents of Kala Patthar (5550m) and then trek to the less frequently visited Gokyo lakes area with a view to ascending the peak of Gokyo Ri (5360m). Our team, led by the Regimental Ops officer, Maj George Hume, included a wide range of ages, ranks and experience which was drawn from across the Regiments three Squadrons and included seven members from the Corps, five Queen's Gurkha Signals, one RAMC and one AGC (SPS).

Our flight out to Nepal with Oman Air via Muscat passed off without incident and the team arrived safely at a bustling Kathmandu airport late in the evening. It was discovered that security scanners were an inconvenience only necessary for locals. Braving the chaos of the arrivals area we were greeted by a gang of 'assistants' and after the mandatory flower garlands had been laboriously handed out we made our way to the hotel. Everyone was amazed that the task of loading our bags required the labour of seven people, although they all seemed happy to have found employment. After a short ride through Kathmandu, we arrived at the Hotel Manang located down an improbable looking side street in the Thamel district of Kathmandu.



A pilot's eye view of the landing strip at Lukla

An administration day followed, where we met our head guide, Kumar. After conducting a day of last minute shopping and final admin, we took an early morning bus ride to the airport for the infamous flight into Lukla. Despite LCpl Andy Williams' confusion as to whether he should present the security staff with a boarding pass or a knife, we made it onto the plane. It is true that the landing into Lukla does look a little precarious as the runway seems impossibly small and the mountains perilously close.

Whilst Capt Kirsty Davies-Walters enjoyed the view of the underside of the seat in front, the pilots expertly landed the plane and we were on our way. The first day's trek through the Dudha Koshi valley was a fine way to warm up for the days ahead. We wound our way through the steep valley passing a number of small villages on the trail. Occasionally a re-entrant would provide a gap and we would glimpse snowy mountain summits some 3000m above us. These scenes would become familiar in the days ahead. We arrived at the optimistically named Green Field lodge in Phakding for our first night's stop and ordered our first of many Nepali set meals. Rice, dhal and potato curry was one of the great certainties of the expedition, as we would come to find out.

Day two saw us leave the relative security of the valley and climb up into the National Park proper. The climb up to Namche was tough in the heat of the day and the first real challenge that we faced, today it was 25 degrees, we were soon to experience what minus 25 degrees felt like. The climb up from the valley to Namche is 800mtrs on the map, however your heart, lungs and legs climb over 1800m during the trek up to Namche Bazaar, with the final 600mtrs in the last 4km. Despite this, Capt Henry Chandler still found the energy to descend a considerable distance to collect a misplaced walking pole - his second fineable offence of the day.

Namche Bazaar is a shock to the system in a number of ways. A veritable metropolis high up in the mountains, it is a mix of knock off gear shops and lodges, a lot of whom are called the 'Everest View'. Like Val Thorens without the chair lifts, it is perched dangerously in a hanging valley at around 3400m. The next day was a planned acclimatisation day and involved a short but energetic walk up out of Namche to Syangboche airstrip and then onto the aptly named Everest View hotel, which differs from similarly named establishments in that it actually offers a view of Everest. The views from here were sublime. Everest was, from here somewhat distant but Ama Dablam (6856m), Thamskeru (6608m) and Kongde (6186m) were all clearly visible.



NORTHERN GOKYO

FEB 2014

by Lt Josh Ingold

Moving on to Deboche, we negotiated a steep sided valley where we witnessed the effect that a landslide has on a metal bridge, accompanied by our ever present Yak train which carried the majority of our overnight equipment, we climbed our way back up out of the valley floor. So crucial were the high altitude beasts of burden to our success that they were given names and corresponding personalities. Whilst Yakie Chan was agile on all terrain, Michael Yakson was less willing to be team player.

The walk to Dingboche took us into glacial moraine for the first time. The scenery changed dramatically to a high mountain environment where snowy peaks, now seemingly within walking distance, shot into the dark blue sky all around us. That evening, some of the team climbed up a spur towards the view point at Nankar Tshang from where we watched the sun set over Ama Dablam.

As the sun went in, our Gurkha contingent produced down jackets that they had stowed in their day sacks. They were wise to do so, temperatures dropped to -20°C that night! Descending back to our lodge, we sat around the much coveted wood (or yak dung) burning stove and drank the ubiquitous lemon and honey tea. The tea houses were themselves an excellent part of the trek. Providing an endless supply of rice and snickers bars, each one with its own unique charms to the trip. Our stay in them was perhaps made even more pleasant through the efforts of our very own local LCpl Tshring Sherpa. His tireless efforts to assimilate the rest of the expedition with local culture became one of the genuine highlights of the expedition.

Another acclimatisation day followed before we set off for Lobuche and the bottom of the Khumbu Glacier. Hiding beneath a sea of moraine, the glacier stretches endlessly up the valley towards EBC (5364m). Its covering of rocks hides the dangers that have made the glacier so hard to negotiate for mountaineers throughout history. It was here, after a stiff climb up the Thukla pass and an all too close call for WO1 (YofS) Binks with some Yaks, that the weather turned for the first time. The spectacular mountain scenery quickly disappeared and we trudged, through falling snow, along the huge banks of moraine discarded by the glacier.



The group at Nankar Tshang

The team at 5500mtrs on a glorious afternoon with Everest and Nuptse in the background. L-R Cpl Timo Boulton, WO1 (YofS) Steve Binks, LCpl Tshring Sherpa, Cpl Jayaram Puri, Cpl Dipal Gurung, Lt Josh Ingold, Maj George Hume, Cpl Jim Beck, Capt Kirsty Davies-Walters, Capt Henry Chandler, LCpl Ajay Gurung, LCpl Andy Williams and SSgt Damber Thapa Magar



After negotiating a treacherous frozen stream, we arrived in Lobuche which sits in the awesome shadow of the peak of Nuptse (7861m) which shielded the sometimes elusive Everest from view. The next day we moved out early to Gorak Shep which sits on the slopes of Kala Patthar.

The decision was made to ascend up to the famous viewpoint that afternoon and we set off across the ancient lake bed and up towards the summit in bright sunshine. At 5500m, the rarefied atmosphere had an effect on all of the party and progress was slow but steady. The wind howled ominously as we climbed in the heat but slowly we gained sight of the rocky prayer flag-adorned outcrop that denoted the summit. Half an hour later we were there with the entire Everest massif in front of us. The summit itself is clearly visible from Kala Patthar, looming clearly above the surrounding peaks like a great dark pyramid with an endless plume of snow rising from its wind raked crest

Far below the glacier snaked its way behind Nuptse and disappeared up the Western Cwm towards the South Col. Before the cold and altitude related headaches could set in we





One for the Corps Colonels wristband collection

took the photo that would add to the Corps Colonel's wrist band collection and descended back to Gorak Shep in order to make preparations for the next day- and the walk to EBC.

The next day blessed us with another cloudless sky and we moved with confidence towards our goal. The final trek along the moraine is an exciting one with huge glacial erratics and spectacular landslides to negotiate along the way. A final drop onto the glacier itself led to a snaking path around hidden ice towers and up towards the prayer flag adorned cairn that marks EBC. A diminutive site outside of the climbing season, it nonetheless represented a high point in the trip for all. The photo below taken at EBC on a day when we had the Khumbu glacier and EBC all to ourselves.

It was on the descent to Gorak Shep that we noticed a significant deterioration to the state of SSgt Damber, who had been stoically suffering in silence for some days. He had finally succumbed to Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS) and had to be helicoptered off to Kathmandu where the reduction in altitude saw him make a swift and full recovery. The rest of the group descended to Pheriche, reaching this small metropolis in the dark, where we were rejoined by Cpl Dipal who had gallantly volunteered to accompany SSgt Damber in the helicopter to collect his kit from the lodge in Pheriche.



The group at Everest Base Camp



The helicopter rescue after collecting Damber from the heli pad at Gorakshep

Descending once more towards Phortse the weather that had been so kind in that crucial 48 hour window, turned again. We decided, following a rest day, that it was no longer viable to trek to Gokyo. Whilst disappointed at this, the group had learned a valuable lesson in the necessity for restraint in the mountains and headed back to Namche knowing that the main aims had been achieved. We found Namche (just!) in another snow storm and settled in for a chilled out evening... I will not account for, in full, the events in Namche over the next 12 hours but they involved a local with a lump on his half frozen head, a British tourist who was lapsing in and out of consciousness, a lot of work for

Capt Henry Chandler and a stretcher carry that would have brought a tear to the eye of any QMSI! After this unexpected adventure, we headed back to Lukla and our first non vegetarian meal in two weeks at a lodge owned by LCpl Tshring Sherpa's uncle. We reached it without incident.

The final days in Kathmandu were principally spent eating meat and buying pashminas and khukuris. We did however, also visit an orphanage and decided to donate money we had collected as fines for mishaps to the orphanage for the purchase of essential supplies.

Returning to the UK, again via Muscat, we were able to reflect on a highly successful expedition that, for some, will be a once in a life time opportunity whilst for others it will have lit the fires of passion for AT in the Army. As a result of the expedition, two of the team gained their SML in the build up and 6 of the team attained their SMF qualification.

The view of Everest and Ama Dablam from Everest view hotel



EXERCISE DRAGON ALPINE

22 – 29 MAR 2014

As the trip organiser not only do I have the honour to plan and carry out a level 3 alpine skiing training expedition for 22 Signal Regiment in Stafford for 25 officers and soldiers to Les Contamines, France but I also get to write *Wire* notes when the trip participants mug me off.

The idea for a Regimental level ski trip took hold as soon as **Maj Hannah Frost** took over command of 222 Signal Squadron in Mar 13. By July 13 the flights and accommodation were booked for the trip to start in Mar 14, all that was needed was a person with endless enthusiasm and drive to take on the planning of the trip. No one of that calibre could be located and so I found myself heading up the planning of the trip and taking on the role as the lead instructor to ensure we had the distributed training clearance to award SF1 and SF2. Luckily, I managed to secure some of the finest instructors in the Corps, many of them with the title 'Corps Champion' under their belts. This refers to **Maj Frost** and **SSgt Kate Hopkinson**. I myself won an award at the Royal Signals race camp (EX ALPINE MERCURY GLACIER) for being the slowest instructor to compete, I retired from the racing circuit soon after, **Maj Andy Arthurton** was also a top racer that completed our team of 4 instructors.



The Instructors

With the planning completed and deciding early on that flights were the way forwards we dept on a British Airways (only the best for 22 SR) flight to Geneva, our Ghurkha contingent gave me a moment of panic as they were stopped and asked for Visas, thankfully, a bit of quick talking from **LCpl Raj** and I smoothed the way.

It was a pleasant surprise when we arrived at UCPA Les Contamines, advertised as a French Youth hostel it was anything but. A bar area allowed socialising on an evening and with full board provided it meant the students could concentrate on their skiing. I use student quite loosely – with the SF2 group consisting of **SSgt Rob Frost**, **Capt Russ Heynes** and **Capt Dean Whitworth**, Mature Student might be a more appropriate term!

Our first morning was glorious with about 20cm of powder falling over night, this gave **Maj Frost** the perfect opportunity to test her group off piste – it was carnage with bodies everywhere and this pattern followed all week. **Lt Pete Malan**, **Lt Phil Rowlands**, **Capt Si Pierson** and **Cpl Sam Foot** were all MIA at one point but discovered buried in the snow or trying to find skis in the powder. Unfortunately **Cpl Foot** couldn't hack the pace and decided to step down to **SSgt Kate Hopkinson's** group to keep **Pte Jody Gaunt** company. This was also where the Regt YofS **WO1 Rob Murray** was hanging out, cruising round the mountain like a pro – he was even confident enough to try out some ski ballet and executed a perfect somersault in the powder, which was a definite 10.

The SF1 groups both moved onto red runs by day 3 and were dealing with conditions well, **Sig Dilbikram** proved an intrepid skier deciding to do a few runs on his own and was eventually spotted on a cable car where he re-joined the group. **Sgt Tom Coole** showed us how a beginner should really ski, regularly hitting 60 kph in the snow plough, always closely followed by **Sig Jason Bradley Taylor** who seemed almost obsessed with the depth of snow and if it ever reached the top of the 40ft trees on the mountain.

Maj Arthurton was always the last group left on the mountain most days; **Sig Mo Morris** and **LCpl Jim Harris** looked broken on the first day then just went downhill (no pun intended) on day 3 when **Sig Morris** lost his phone. This fate also hit **Sig Sandesh** whose white iPhone slipped out of his pocket into the snow – he is still looking for it now.

We finished the week with a group meal out where prizes were awarded to each group from their instructors and talk of a bigger and better trip for the Regiment next season – thanks **SSgt Frost**.

As always these things couldn't go ahead without the full support of all the different Regimental Depts. A special thank you to the ROA, MT and QM dept and to the OIC, **Maj Frost**. Our instructors; **Sgt Kerry Hopkinson**, **SSgt Kate Hopkinson** and **Maj Andy Arthurton**, deserve a big thanks for keeping everyone safe and getting qualified. But most of all to the trip participants for providing all the laughs we had.



The skiers of 22 Signal Regiment in Les Contamines, France



ROYAL SIGNALS ASSOCIATION



Col (Retd) Terry Canham
Tel: 01258 482081



Maj (Retd) Mark Tivey
Tel: 01258 482082



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Blandford Camp
Blandford Forum
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Patron: HRH The Princess Royal
President: The Master of Signals
Chairman: Brig DA Hargreaves

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Mrs Linda Sizeland
Tel: 01258 482089



Mrs Caroline Addison
Tel: 01258 482090

General Secretary and Treasurer: Col (Retd) T Canham
Assistant General Secretary: Maj (Retd) M Tivey
Welfare Secretary: Mrs L Sizeland
Membership Secretary: Mrs C Addison

The RSA now has a new home on the www! I hope that you will like the new site and find that it is easier than ever to find out information about the Corps, both serving and retired. You can find us at: <http://royalsignals.org/>

By the time that this issue of *The Wire* is published, it will be very close to the Reunion weekend which we are again hoping will be blessed with sunshine, although the good company will be evident even if it rains! We are again anticipating a good series of displays from current units and hope that everyone who joins us will have an enjoyable time.

As many of you will be aware, this year the Reunion is being held just before Corps Week which will be 23 Jun – 27 Jun with the Corps Luncheon being held on 29 Jun. This year Armed Forces Day falls on 28 Jun. The National Event will be proudly hosted by the historic city of Stirling. There will be events countrywide in honour of our Servicemen and women, past and present. For more information visit: <http://www.armedforcesday.org.uk/>

You may have heard that the Howes Wood Plaque has been removed from the Howes Wood Building next to the gymnasium at Blandford Camp and the building renamed as the "Blandford Garrison Fitness Centre". In its new role (it was previously an adventurous training store and then the boxing club) it is an excellent facility for the trainees, but it is worth noting that the intention is to place the Howes Wood plaque in a more prominent position, ideally next to the RSA Memorial Garden in front of the Princess Mary Hall (although that has still to be confirmed), and probably at the foot of a newly planted tree. This will mean that the memorial plaque will be seen by many more people than is currently the case and will be in a much more appropriate place for those who wish to pay their respects in memory of the two murdered NCOs. The original memorial garden and sundial at Catterick will remain there and is being looked after by the staff at Catterick Garrison. It is hoped that this can be achieved before the 2014 RSA weekend. RHQ will keep members up to date on progress.

Report On 2014 Annual General Meeting

- by the Admin Officer

The AGM 2014 took place on 15 March 2014 in the Victory Services Club. There were 112 members present, representing the Branches and Affiliated Associations. The Master of Signals, Lt Gen Nick Pope CBE, the Colonel Royal Signals, Col

Graham Norton, and the CRSM, WO1 Rob Luke were also present. The RSM 11 (RSS) Sig Regt, WO1 Chris Hoggard, sent his apologies due to travel conditions from Scotland.

This meeting was chaired by Brig David Hargreaves, who introduced the new Master of Signals to the delegates. The meeting heard about the current situation regarding the update of the Rules of the Association. They were told that this would take a little longer to finalise than was envisaged last year and that the solicitors and the Charity Commissioners were discussing the best way to proceed. The Chairman again assured everyone that all members would continue to be updated on progress and said that at the moment it was not possible to give a date for completion. Other topics for discussion were: the RSA Reunion in Blandford to be held over the weekend of 21/22 June 2014, an update from RSBF Welfare and a talk by the RSBF Marketing Officer. The AGM heard that 556 cases of Signallers in need had been helped over the previous 12 months, totalling £293,994. Delegates were asked to note future events in the calendar for later in the year including the Memorial Cycle Ride and Service at the NMA on 29 July 2014, and the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols (Area 2 Carol Service) in Liverpool Cathedral on 29 November. The dates for the Opening of the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey on 6 November, and the Cenotaph Parade on 9 November 2014 were confirmed. The Admin Officer said that anyone who would like to find out more about these events should contact her on 01258 482090, or via email admin@royalsignalsassociation.co.uk. The Master of Signals was then invited to address the meeting and gave a very informative and interesting talk. He was followed by Col Norton, and WO1 Luke, who were joined by: Cpl McDonald, LCpl Beazley and Sig Mitchell from 11 (Royal School of Signals) Signal Regiment who made their presentation on the serving Corps to the meeting. This was a very illuminating and amusing presentation which was very much appreciated by the audience. The AGM concluded with a very welcome buffet lunch which was a good opportunity for socialising. Following this, the delegates left for home to convene again next year on Saturday 14 March 2015 in the same location, the Carisbrooke Hall, Victory Services Club, London.

A copy of the AGM Minutes can be obtained by application via email to the Admin Officer, see address above or by sending a SAE to Admin Officer, RSA, HQ R SIGNALS, Griffin House, Blandford Camp, DT11 8RH.



New Life Members. A warm welcome to the following members, enrolled since the last edition of *The Wire*:

LCpl Antony Adams	1991-00	Lt Col Russell Hills	1985-93	SSgt Richard Meakin	1990-date
Cpl Nicholas Berry	1992-13	Sig Paul Hiron	1984-86	LCpl James Meldrum	1980-84
LCpl Alan Birchall	1987-96	Cpl Alan Hislop	2001-08	LCpl Peter Mitchell	1974-89
LCpl Graeme Booth-Guy	1971-85	LCpl Sidney Holderness	1975-86	Sig Michael Moore	1991-03
Cpl Andrew Bowden	1989-00	Sig Christopher Hooper	1976-79	LCpl William Morris	1960-66
Cpl Mark Boylan	1982-94	Cpl Paul Hornsby	1983-94	Sig Phillip Morris	1984-86
WO2 Kerry Brown	1992-date	Maj Paul Horton	1975-14	LCpl William Murray	1991-04
Cpl David Brown	1991-99	Sig Rick Huggins	1992-98	Sig Robert Neal	1989-97
LCpl Emma Brown	1998-04	Sgt Brian Hutchinson	1969-78	Sig Clive Orpwood	1982-85
LCpl Clare Bruce	2000-date	WO2 Kenny Irwin	1988-date	Cpl Brian Owen	1968-90
WO2 Mark Bullivant	1980-04	Cpl William Isles	1970-85	Sig Daniel Philitoga	2003-date
LCpl Ian Campbell	1989-12	Sig Andrew Jenkins	1988-93	Cpl Matty Riley	1998-date
SSgt Andrew Carr	1992-date	LCpl Michael Jenkinson	1977-86	SSgt Philip Shawcross	1985-date
SSgt Clint Challand	1991-date	Sig Derek Johnson-Brown	1983-89	Pte (WRAC) Jill Shillito	1979-85
SSgt Gary Cheshire	1981-13	Sig Derek Jolley	1955-57	Sig Allan Sirett	1947-49
Sgt Brian Clarke	1989-date	SSgt Michael Jones	1984-06	Cpl Nick Slater	1991-99
SSgt Michael Clubb	1990-13	Sig Stephen Kennedy	1982-87	LCpl Kenneth Stewart	1984-91
Sig Roland Collins	1970-73	LCpl Peter Knight	1974-86	Cpl Keith Stuart-Clarke	1972-82
Cpl Matthew Dodman	1999-date	Sig Anthony Lowe	1990-95	Cpl Stephen Thawley	1984-96
Cpl Graham Dove	1970-79	Cpl Mark Lowes	1978-13	LCpl Stuart Thomas	2001-date
Sgt Kelly Drury	2000-date	WO1 (FofS) Dennis Mable	1968-92	Sig Andrew Toman	1989-95
WO2 Trev Evans	1992-date	Sig Br Mackenzie-Hanson	1995-98	Sgt Paul Tozer	1963-87
Cpl Andrew Fife	1981-94	WO2 (YofS) Adam Malin	1986-12	Cpl Francis Turiccki	2004-13
SSgt Nicholas Fordyce	1975-94	Sgt Andrew Mapstone	1983-06	Lt Col Colin Vaudin	1991-13
Cpl Walter Forsyth	1962-77	Capt Jonathan Markendale	2004-14	Cpl Sean Voyle	2004-14
Sgt Aaron Fox	1996-date	Cpl Keith Martin	1985-07	Sgt Alistair Wade	1962-75
Sig Derek Frazer	1971-74	LCpl Dan Martin	1980-90	WO2 James Waterson	1974-93
LCpl Daniel Griffiths	2003-date	Sgt James Mason	1991-13	SSgt (YofS) Alan Watts	1962-84
Capt Francis Hale	1984-08	Sig Peter Maw	2006-13	Cpl Chris Wells	1985-94
Cpl Barrie Hammill	1966-77	Sig Malcolm McKeown	1982-85	LCpl Gary Wilkes	2000-date
WO1 (FofS) David Hancock	1983-05	Capt Philip McLeish	1990-date	Sig Philip Woods	1977-81
SSgt Peter Havlin	1962-87	Cpl Ian McSween	1966-74	Cpl Matthew Worthington	1999-date

DONATIONS

The RSBF would like to thank the following groups, individuals and fundraisers

Donations:

Individuals:

Mr R Waldron
 Mr MG Evans
 Mr PA Drummond
 Mr R Harvey Blizzard
 Mrs Rosslyn C Beattie
 Mrs CM Topple
 Mr Calvin Kielty
 Mr Richard Homes
 Mr Hutchinson
 Mr Rhys Griffiths
 Mr Charles Hoar
 Mrs J Scholar

RSA Branches and other Organisations:

The GF Eyre Charitable Trust
 RSA Guernsey Branch
 RSA Tameside Branch
 RSA Lincoln Branch
 RSA Dorset Branch
 RSA Reading Branch
 Association of Friends (Spec Comms)
 Blandford Gurkha Community

Corporate Donations

Vodafone

Units:

243 Sig Sqn, 10 Sig Regt

“In Memory” Collections:

Maj Gen IOJ Sprackling OBE
 Maj TPF Unwin
 Mr J Logan
 Mr GC Watkins

Fundraisers:

Mr Steven Ware
 Mr Santa Garung
 Mr Paul Levin
 Mr Daniel Ciborowski
 Mr Rob Brown
 Mr Gary Jones
 Mr Kev Miller
 Mr Justin Kibble

Featured Fundraiser: YofS Rob Brown of 202 Sig Sqn, 3 DSR who has arranged a number of street collections. Thank you.

For more info visit us at: www.royalsignals.org/rsbf or find us on Facebook under: Royal Signals Benevolent Fund – Fundraisers.
 Email: marketing@royalsignals.com



ALDERSHOT BRANCH

Chairman **Noel Moss**
Secretary **Mary Pagan**

Continuing our successful arrangement for morning talks at Fleet, followed by a pub lunch, we had an excellent attendance on 13 March of around 40, including members from the local Branch of the Royal British Legion. The Speaker, **Christopher Hawkings**, was a fifth generation auctioneer, having had his first experience with Phillips Auctioneers as a porter on his school holidays and eventually serving with the firm worldwide over a period of 35 years, before retiring as Deputy Chairman in 1992.

Mr Hawkings told us many amusing anecdotes. Harry Phillips started his own auction house after leaving Christie's, having been refused a pay rise because he had only worked for the company for ten years! He had his revenge later, beating Christies to win the first ever auction from Buckingham Palace of items surplus to Queen Victoria's requirements!

Among the splendid 35mm slides displayed were a Ming Vase which had been brought to a sale wrapped in a Marks & Spencer sweater by a mother carrying a baby. The vase fetched £135,000. Perhaps one of the most extraordinary exhibits was found sticking out from a settee in East Anglia, turning out to be a page from George Washington's 1789 inaugural address and sold for £199,000.

As well as conducting conventional auctions, our Speaker had organised periodic charitable auctions for the BBC Blue Peter programme and currently helps Woking Hospice in valuing donated objects, which are then sold in their shops. After the talk, he joined a group of us at the local De Havilland Arms, where we socialised over a very pleasant lunch.

On Sunday 13 April, our Spring lunch was again held at the attractive venue of Camberley Heath Golf Club. The event was well supported although last minute sickness and injuries kept several members away. We were pleased to welcome old friends from Reading and Blandford. Our guest was the newly appointed OC 251 Signal Squadron, **Maj Gavin Darke**,



Maj Gavin Darke presenting retiring Treasurer Peter Sharpe with a token of the Branches appreciation

accompanied by his wife, **Rebecca**, who is also a serving officer in the Royal Logistic Corps. The excellent carvery lunch was followed by the AGM, in which a main feature was the departure from the committee, after 17 years continuous service, of our Treasurer, **Peter Sharpe**. In recognition of his excellent accountancy, he was presented with two elegant wine goblets. The Treasurer's appointment is always a difficult one to fill, but we are pleased to say that two existing committee members, **Keith Hall** and **Chris Endean** rallied around and are now going to undertake the task as a joint venture!

Gavin Darke gave us an insight into his Squadron activities, understandably concise as he had only arrived 3 weeks ago! But he was also made to 'sing for his supper' by presenting, on behalf of RHQ, the 50 Year Badge to our Chairman, **Noel Moss**. This award was long overdue, as it was revealed that **Noel** has a total service of no less than 55 years, including his non-stop Chairmanship of the Branch for the past 20 years. The committee were delighted to have kept secret the award, until the moment of presentation! Our Secretary, **Mary Pagan** had, as usual, produced the beautiful flower arrangements for the tables. These became welcome prizes in the raffle, which **Mary** also conducted.



Maj Gavin Darke presenting retiring Treasurer Peter Sharpe with a token of the Branch's appreciation

CAMBRIDGE BRANCH

- by Len Carr

Following the AGM held on Thursday 27 February 2014, a new Committee was elected for this year is as follows :

Chairman	Eddie Kikas
Vice Chairman	Leon Cracknell
Secretary	Diana Abrey
Treasurer	John Morley
BIM	Len Carr
BVO	Sue Cracknell
Event organiser	Graham Wade
Standard Bearers	Graham Wade and Pete Sacre

The Branch thanked the retiring Chairman, **Tony Peachey**, for ten years at the helm, with a suitable presentation.

For the 2014/15 AGM we will revert to the November meeting.

Our meeting on Thursday was the first where our Branch and that of the Royal Engineers Association had a joint social in the





Tony Peachey receiving his presentation

bar after our respective meetings and the feedback from Members were very positive.

Having nearly forty people present, made it a very sociable evening of chat and banter with like minded people and the future for both our Associations looks promising!



Mrs Dell Peachey presented with flowers by Mrs Sue Cracknell on behalf of the Branch

COTSWOLD BRANCH

- By Stuart James, Vice Chairman

It has been an encouraging year with membership improving and the younger generation helping to swell the attendance at the various meetings, and we thank them for that.

The AGM, held on 5 March, was well attended with lively discussion about possible changes and visits to places of interest, providing we can fill the costly coaches. Partners and friends will be invited.

The meeting opened with a two minute silence to remember members who have recently died, with a special thought for **Derek Wheatly**, a long time member of our group.

The Chairman's, Treasurer's and Secretary's reports were read followed by special thanks to our Chairman for his part in revitalising the group. We enjoyed the visit to ARB and the enjoyable Christmas dinner and, of course, our monthly social

evenings. We know these meetings will continue with the support of serving members and we have a visit to Gloucester Cathedral for the centenary of WWI with the Cheltenham Symphony Orchestra providing music, classic songs and poetry to look forward to. Also, a visit to the Cheltenham Town Hall for a comedy evening entitled *Howlers in the Hall* has been arranged. Possible trips to Blandford and Chelsea are also under discussion.

The Remembrance Day event in Cheltenham included the laying of the crosses and the Regimental wreath by committee members. Next year it is hoped that our involvement will include the carrying of the Regiment's banner in the parade.

Thus, with a lively AGM and a promising programme of events and activities, it can only mean "Upwards and Onwards" for the Branch.

EAST LONDON BRANCH

Chairman **Neill Keen**
Secretary **Alan Turner**

After a couple of relatively quiet winter months our Annual Dinner Dance took place at the Ilford Army Reserve Centre on Saturday 22 March with around 70 attending including our Guest of Honour, **Maj (Retd) Mark Tivey** who after a lavish three course meal had to address the audience with a short address on the state of the Corps and RSA.



Our Top Table – L - R: Mark & Caroline Tivey, Neill & Anita Keen, Jackie Allan, Jane & Des Nicholson, Iris & Paul Burton

Three of our members had recently qualified for 50 Year Awards and these were read out and presented by our President, **Lt Col Jackie Allan to Pat O'Shea, Roy Bilby and Dave Coles** who was unable to attend. Finally there was an RSA Honour Award to present to our recently retired Chairman, **Maj (Retd) Paul Burton** for his services to the Branch over many years. Once this and the customary Toasts had all taken place, the entertainment committee swiftly re-organised tables and chairs so that dancing could start. Sadly, just before midnight, it all had to come to an end and Standard Bearer **Roy Bilby** performed our closing ceremony.

We are now looking forward to our next event which will be our Supper Dance on Saturday 1 November which this year will be at the Ilford Golf Club where we had our Annual Dinner last year. The big date we are really looking forward to though, is the joint laying up of our old Standard and dedication of the new Standard service which will take place in a local church in Wanstead on Wednesday 8 April 2015. We will be sending out invitations to RHQ and local Branches, but





L - R: Roy Bilby, Paul Burton and Pat O'Shea with their Award Certificates

if any other RSA member would like to join us please contact me via the email address below.

We always welcome new members so if you are an ex or serving signaller living in East London, South and East Essex area and would like to join us then why not come along to one of our meetings which are held in the Army Reserve Centre, Gordon Road, Ilford at 7:30pm on the 4th Thursday of each month (except December). Email: alanj.turner@ntlworld.com for more details.

GLASGOW BRANCH

At the AGM held at Jardine Street, Glasgow on 15 April 2014, **John 'Jackie' Dolan** was presented with his 50 Year Badge and Certificate by **Col Petrie**, the Branch President. The venue was very apt, as **Jackie** had served all his service both within the Corps and as an Association Member at these premises. He is still a very active member of the Branch.



Jackie Dolan being presented his 50 Year Certificate by Branch President Col Petrie

Also at the AGM were members who also received their respective 50 Year Badges and Certificates the previous year, **Col Petrie, Jackie Dolan and Bill McNamara**. All we need now are some younger Members to continue the good work and standard set by these gentlemen.



Col Petrie, Jackie Dolan and Bill McNamara with their 50 Certificates

MANCHESTER BRANCH

- By Henry W Jones

The Branch Christmas dinner/dance was held at the GM Police club Chorlton-cum-Hardy on 7 Dec 2013 attended by almost 100 guests. After the "top table" was piped in, grace was said by Branch President **John Allotson** and we sat down to an excellent meal that has become the norm at this venue.

Our guest of honour this year was the new chairman of the RSA, **Brig David Hargreaves** and his wife **Kathleen**. The Brigadier gave a very illuminating and witty address about the state of the serving Corps plus some of the activities of the RSA during the last 12 months. The toasts to the Queen, our Colonel in Chief and Absent Friends were proposed by the Committee, **Ron Taylor, Pete Griffin and Harry Ferguson**.

Our Chairman then gave his address, which proved to be his swansong as Chair of the Branch. **Ron** and **Marion** upped sticks and went to live on the Fylde Coast in 2012 and **Ron** found it increasingly difficult to undertake a 120 mile round trip to the Branch meetings, so in the interest of all concerned he decided that his resignation from the post he has held for 22 years would be the best course of action. We would like to extend our sincerest gratitude to **Ron** and **Marion** for their dedication to the Branch over the years and wish them many years of happiness in their new home in Blackpool and "come up and see us sometime".

Before our guest of honour departed, **Brig Hargreaves** was presented with a print of a scene of bygone Manchester and **Kathleen** was presented with a floral bouquet in appreciation of their presence with us. The proceedings went on until the small hours in the hands of the DJ.

Many thanks to all concerned for an excellent evening and special thanks to the catering staff at the Police Club.

On Remembrance Sunday 2013 this scribe had the honour of laying the official wreath on behalf of the Corps at the British



Cyprus Memorial in Kyrenia, honouring the 13 Royal Signals personnel killed during the Eoka emergency of 1955-59. Since 2009 a very handsome memorial has existed at the Old British Cemetery in Kyrenia, Northern Cyprus and about 30 veterans travel to the Remembrance service every year. If any Signallers who served in this conflict are still out there, we'd love you to join our happy band.

READING BRANCH

Chairman **Mrs Pauline Tennant**
Secretary **Lt Col (Retd) Hugh Nealon**

Over the last year or so the Reading Branch committee has been giving much thought to the future of the Branch. Our numbers are dwindling, our membership is ageing and we are not enrolling any new members, despite our best efforts. We have however been fortunate to add one new member to the Committee. **Mrs Julie Bolt** has kindly agreed to take over the role of Visiting Officer. **Julie** is the widow of **Maj Ben Bolt**, our previous Visiting/Welfare Officer, who sadly died so suddenly last year.

From the discussions at the Association's London AGM in March it was apparent that we are not alone in our present situation, and that the new generation prefer to maintain contact via the internet networks. At our own AGM, also in March, the decision was therefore taken, with great regret, that we could not continue in our present form and that the Branch will stand down after our AGM in 2015. In the meantime the Branch will continue with a reduced programme of formal and informal meetings, plus what will probably be our last Annual Dinner. For those interested in attending please note in your diaries that the Dinner will take place on Friday 25 July at Sonning Golf Club, our usual venue.

From 2015 onwards our current members will be transferred to the RSA General Branch, but we hope to maintain contact locally via an informal dining club. Details of how this will be organised, and more especially who will organise are still under discussion. Should there be an influx of new blood to the Branch (contact details are on the RSA website), then our decision to stand down might be reconsidered. We are not holding our breath.

254 OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION

254 OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION (SOUTHERN CHAPTER)

Members of the 254 OBA living in the south of England, and some from further afield, started to arrive at Hedge End, on Friday afternoon, 4 April, for the fifth annual Southern Chapter get-together to be held at the Botleigh Grange Hotel. First to arrive, as usual, were **Jim** and **Rita Braid** from Clacton who arrived on Thursday, **Jim** bearing the Association Standard. Seventeen sat down for dinner on Friday evening, amongst them **Brian Fisher** and **Mavis Jones** with **Mavis'** two daughters, **Zena** and **Lynn** who were attending for the first time.

Saturday dawned dark and gloomy but after plates of "Full English" members' spirits were revived and they went their different ways. Your scribe visited Botley Mill where Mrs Scribe bought supplies of their excellent flour for her

breadmaker and, finding a clothes shop, she supported local business by investing in a fetching grey cardigan! A leisurely thrash up and down in the hotel pool then back to the bar where, fortified by cream teas, we welcomed the rear party as they arrived.

At dinner **Claire Mellor** found herself seated near to **Pat Soward** who promptly handed her the gavel. He welcomed all present, mentioning particularly those attending for the first time, **Zena** and **Lynn**, **Harry Hawke** and **Toby Seymour's** brother, **Donald**. A warm welcome was also accorded to **Mike Severs**, **Alan Leech** and **Mandy Hawkins** who had made it possible for their mothers, **Margaret**, **Sheila** and **Auriol Bussell**, to join us.

After grace dinner was served - mouthwatering Salmon & Seafood Roulade and Duck & Orange Terrine, Pan Fried Rump of Lamb and Roast Breast of Chicken, Lemon Tart and Wild Berry & Vanilla Forte being favourite choices. Before coffee was served a toast was drunk to 'Absent Friends', remembering particularly **Don Nichols** who had regularly attended our gatherings and **Barry Horton** who had died only a few weeks previously.

The waiter and two waitresses who had looked after us so well returned to the dining room and **Pat Soward** handed them a bowl brimming with paper money generously donated by members. He thanked them and they left amid well deserved applause.

After a hearty self-service breakfast members reluctantly dispersed. In-pensioner **Bill Ramsay** left by taxi to catch his train. **Jim** and **Rita Braid** planned to break their long drive to Clacton by visiting relatives on the way home whilst **Mike Severs** had driven back to Dorchester with his mother, **Margaret**, the previous evening to continue their holiday.

The hotel has already been booked for next year's reunion over the weekend March 20th - 22nd.

BEVERLEY EX-BOYS ASSOCIATION

Chairman: **John Hill**
Branch Secretary: **Tony Hull**

It is with sadness that we announce that the Beverley Ex-Boys Association will be closing at the end of 2014. Our last Reunion will be held on 27th September at the Willerby Manor Hotel, Willerby, Yorkshire and we are hoping for a good turnout.

The annual Barbecue will be held in Bournemouth at the home of our Branch Secretary, **Tony Hull**, on 20 July 2014. We hope that the Barbecues will continue for a few more years.

HERFORDER ASSOCIATION

Herforder Association invades Morecambe.

March 7 - 10 saw the Herforder Association host its first reunion of 2014 at the Headway Hotel in Morecambe. For those of you not familiar with the Herforder Association it is a group of both ex and serving members of the Army who have served in the Herford area of Germany, regardless of



cap badge, including civilian members of supporting organisations such as NAAFI, SKC, Welfare etc.

The Association holds 2 reunions a year, usually in March and October and tries to hold one in the North and one in the Southern area of England based on location of members. Over recent years they have been held in Mold, St Annes, Bannockburn, Morecambe, Bathgate, Herford in Germany and planned for the Normandy Beaches in October 2014. So we do get around a bit, with members going back to National Service days.

So for the March one this year we invaded Morecambe with over 70 attending for a weekend of bed, breakfast, evening meal and one or two social drinks, including a good supply of Herforder Pils, well it is the Herforder Association! Most members started arriving on the Friday afternoon (advance party arriving Thursday to ensure all was in order, and to test the Herfie) and leaving after breakfast on the Monday.

A good entertaining weekend was enjoyed by all but unfortunately the supply of Herforder Pils only lasted till around the afternoon of the Saturday, and we could not get more supplies because we had emptied the UK suppliers' stock already.

Saturday evening is usually a formal dinner and this one was no exception with a guest of honour in attendance. **Brig David Hargreaves**, Chairman of the Royal Signals Association and his good lady. The Brigadier was met on arrival by the committee, Chairman **Jim Sloan**, Secretary **Liz Miller**, Vice Chair **Alex McGregor** (Scottish National Dress) and Treasurer **David Rooney**. After dinner there was a presentation of flowers for the Brigadier's good lady as well as a small token

to the Brigadier from the Association, including a small hip flask, filled naturally and the Associations favourite drink. The Brigadier gave a short speech of thanks to the Association for the invite and for the long standing support, he also outlined his current role within the Corps and RSA and quoted from a RSA handbook dated back to the 1920's, things haven't changed that much. The aims and support the RSA gives remains pretty much the same today. He also spoke to almost all of the members during his visit and this was much appreciated by all in attendance.



The Association dinner with guest of honour Brig David Hargreaves

A good weekend, a good organisation for members to get together and chat about old times as well as good and bad times. All over a civilised quiet social gathering, roll on the next one.

LAST POST

LCpl WT Baynham	1943/47	20-Mar-14	LCpl VW Humphreys	1956/59	??-Sep-13
Sig GP Bergin	1945/48	27-Apr-14	Cpl C Hurley	1965/88	16-Apr-14
Maj W Brindley	1939/63	04-Apr-14	LCpl MD Jones	1984/98	09-Mar-14
Sgt EGV Burgoyne	1939/45	24-Apr-14	Sgt MR Kearney	1962/84	28-Apr-14
LCpl F Burns	1955/57	??-Mar-14	WO RW Kelly	1937/62	24-Apr-14
Maj AB Cooper	1953/88	15-Apr-14	Sgt CAC Lambert	1976/92	04-Apr-14
SSgt JD Coultish	1961/86	04-May-14	Cpl J McCann	1944/48	15-Apr-14
Sig WS Crighton	1939/46	24-Mar-14	Cpl JG McGill	1963/85	06-May-14
WO1 DA Curley	1948/68	21-Mar-14	Sig R McIntosh	1966/73	22-Mar-14
Capt MJ Dunmall	1972/78	25-Oct-13	Maj FC McLoughlin	1960/93	16-Mar-14
WO2 RG Ellis	1963/84	13-Feb-14	WO1 TK Muir	1963/88	23-Apr-14
WO1 TJ Ellison	1961/85	31-Mar-14	Sig KN Murphy	1954/57	27-Mar-14
Sgt JE Ettl	1939/46	06-Jan-14	Cpl AW Nash	1944/47	??
Cpl K Everett	1943/47	22-Feb-14	Sgt EF Pointer	1940/45	01-Oct-10
Cpl AF Finlay	1971/75	09-Nov-11	Capt DJT Poole	1962/99	13-Apr-14
Sig JS Fleming	2009/date	18-Apr-14	Brig WE Sherratt MBE	1943/74	12-May-14
Capt I Fry	1944/65	10-Mar-14	Maj Gen IOJ Sprackling	1956/96	28-Mar-14
JF Fryett	1945/48	10-Feb-14	Cpl D Thomasson	1965/75	10-May-14
WO2 I Garner	1999/date	13-Apr-14	Sig M Tomlinson	1955/58	24-Apr-14
Sig MC Gelken	1971/76	04-Apr-14	LCpl PA Toole	1969/81	08-Sep-05
Sgt DH Gillingham	1940/46	24-Mar-14	Sgt FA Towler	1939/43	26-Apr-14
Sig DR Grantham	1950/51	??-Mar-14	LCpl CP Upfield	1971/78	23-Feb-14
Maj PJ Handibode	1970/05	07-May-14	LCpl LA Usher	1939/46	05-Apr-14
Sig JL Harris	1942/46	02-May-14	Lt EPJ Walker	1939/46	11-Apr-14
SSgt TW Hedges	1938/48	??-Jun-06	LCpl GJ Walker	1951/53	20-Apr-14
Cpl H Henthorne	1947/50	??	Lt Col MRC Weiner	1952/92	16-Apr-14
Capt RE Herbert	1939/46	08-Apr-14	SSgt WG Westgate	1937/68	??-??-13
Maj PW Hill	1940/46	02-Mar-14	Sig D Wiseman	1960/70	30-Apr-14
Sgt AF Huet	1952/77	20-Mar-14			





RSA Reunion Weekend

21/22 June 2014

Blandford Camp

For further details
please contact the
RSA Admin Officer,
Caroline Addison, on
01258 482090

